



## How can Physical Therapy Help?

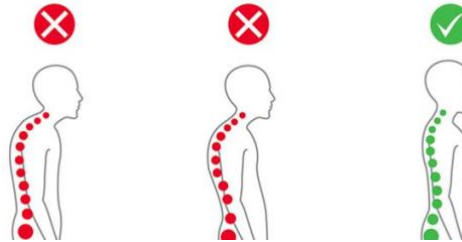
Many patients experience a successful rehabilitation with physical therapy. Services will often include some combination of:

- Pain management
- Manual therapy
- Range of motion exercises
- Strengthening exercises
- Posture training
- Education
- Functional training

It is important to understand that active patient participation in physical therapy is essential. Performing certain exercises has been shown to restore pain-free movement of the shoulder. Your physical therapist works with you and personalizes a rehabilitation program that fits your needs and your situation. You will learn how to take control of your shoulder health.

## What can I do?

The most important thing that you can do for your health if you suspect shoulder impingement is to seek an evaluation from a physical therapist or your doctor. Especially if detected early, prompt treatment of shoulder impingement will relieve symptoms, strengthen your shoulder, and get you back to doing the things that you do, pain-free.

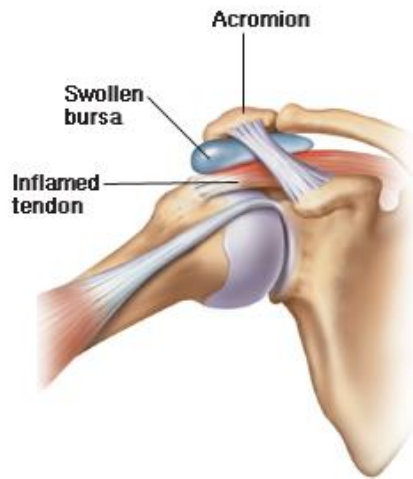


Poor posture is a strong risk factor for developing shoulder impingement. While your physical therapist can give you thorough education about good posture and proper alignment, being mindful about your posture can really help to prevent shoulder impingement. Avoid the forward head or “text neck” position and avoid slouching when seated. Instead, stand and sit tall with your shoulder blades gently rolled down and back, shoulders over the hips, and your ears drawn back in alignment with your



## SHOULDER IMPINGEMENT

*Jeremy Bradford, SDPT*



## What are the symptoms?

The most common symptoms of shoulder impingement include:

- Pain when reaching the arm overhead or out to the side
- Weakness of the shoulder muscles



## What is shoulder impingement?

Shoulder impingement is a common cause of shoulder pain. It occurs when the rotator cuff tendons or bursa in the shoulder get “pinched” by the bones of the shoulder. Often the pain is persistent and affects everyday activities. Activities such as reaching overhead or putting on a coat can feel quite painful. Shoulder impingement will cause inflammation of the rotator cuff tendons or bursa. If left untreated, the condition may eventually lead to tearing of rotator cuff tendons and decreased use of the arm. Excessive overhead activity is a risk factor. Shoulder impingement is most often caused by poor posture of the neck and spine and by weakness of rotator cuff muscles.



## How is it diagnosed?

Diagnosis begins with a review of your medical history and a physical examination. X-rays may be taken to rule out other conditions such as arthritis, but in many cases your healthcare provider may be able to determine the presence of shoulder impingement during an initial evaluation.

## How is it treated?

A variety of treatments options are available for shoulder impingement. In most cases, physical therapy is the first option and gold standard, and treatment may also include:

- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medication such as aspirin, ibuprofen, or naproxen sodium
- Cortisone injection
- Shoulder surgery

Careful consideration should be given to repeated cortisone injections since they may have a detrimental effect on the integrity of shoulder tissues. Generally, surgery for shoulder impingement is considered a last resort and typically reserved for substantial rotator cuff tendon tears.