



## Shoulder Injuries

With the condition frozen shoulder, the main problem apart from pain, is restricted movement. But what about those of you who have full movement in the shoulder, but suffer horrible pinching, catching type of pain as the arm is lifted up? Read on and we will explain all...

The shoulder is a ball and socket joint. The socket, which is part of the shoulder blade, is very shallow. This allows us to move our arms in all directions. The ball part is the upper end of the arm bone.

The actual shoulder joint sits just below the joint where the end of the collar bone attaches to the shoulder blade. There should be at least a 1centimetre gap between this joint and the shoulder joint. It is in this gap or space that tendons can be pinched or squeezed as your arm is lifted upwards. The pinching usually occurs at the half way stage, when your hand is level with your shoulder. By the time your arm is stretched right up, the pain has often disappeared. It can return, miserably, as your arm is lowered down, again at the half way stage.

There are three stages of impingement:

Stage One: This is generally due to overuse. In other words, it is caused by repetitive overhead movements of the arm. It is mainly due to inflammation of the pinched tendon.

We treat this by initially reducing the inflammation, and then we aim to remove the cause of the pinching by training modification – showing people how to lift their arms up without hunching the shoulder.

Stage Two: Without initial treatment, thickening and fibrosis of the pinched tendon occurs over time, and movement will become limited.

Stage Three: This is a more chronic stage. You can get bony changes and sometimes calcified deposits in the pinched tendon

Why does the tendon become pinched in the first place? This is when physiotherapy can really help. At the Wye Physiotherapy Practice we examine shoulders thoroughly. Quite often, it is caused by weakness of the little shoulder muscles that are designed to keep the ball part in the middle of the socket throughout movement. This then allows the ball part to ride upwards in the socket and ram into the bony joint above it.

Similarly, the ball part of the arm bone can sit too far forwards or backwards in its socket.

We can re-educate muscle imbalances – strengthen weak muscles and stretch out tight structures in order to achieve a more symmetrical balanced movement pattern, which prevents the ball part riding up in the socket.

If you are suffering with this type of problem, try to avoid hunching your shoulder as you lift your arm. Try to keep the shoulder blade down.