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Impingement Syndrome

Impingement syndrome refers to pain and inflammation that occurs from the rotator cuff muscles of the shoulder impinging on the undersurface of the point of the shoulder known as the acromion. The rotator cuff refers to four muscles that coalesce around the shoulder joint to provide stability for normal function. There are a number of anatomical and biological factors which may contribute to impingement syndrome. Anything that alters the amount of space for shoulder muscles to function such as arthritis, bone spurs, and degeneration or weakness of the rotator cuff may precipitate this process. Repetitive overhead motion along with these predisposing factors is responsible for many such cases.

As with most inflammatory conditions, treatment is focused at first decreasing the amount of inflammation. This can be performed with appropriately prescribed anti-inflammatory medication or ice to the area four times daily for 20 minutes. You and your surgeon may consider an injection with a steroid such as cortisone. Despite treating the inflammation, the problem is only partially solved and may return without properly stretching and strengthening the muscles and modifying any provocative activities.

We have assembled a series of stretches and exercises which have proven clinical benefits in treating impingement syndrome. Please visit our Physical Therapy tab at our website www.floridajointcare.com to view our instructional videos created by our surgeons and therapists to correctly perform these stretches and exercises at home.

Home Exercise Program

1. Active resisted internal rotation – perform 20 repetitions, perform twice daily
2. Active resisted external rotation – perform 20 repetitions, perform twice daily
3. Active resisted extension – perform 20 repetitions, perform twice daily
4. Active shoulder retraction – perform 10 repetitions, perform twice daily
5. Shoulder abduction exercises – perform 10 repetitions, perform twice daily
6. Wall pushups – perform 10 repetitions, perform twice daily
7. Sleeper stretch – hold for 30 seconds, perform twice daily

* May adjust number of repetitions and number of sets as tolerated. May reduce range of motion for each exercise until motion improves.

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