

ROTATOR CUFF INJURIES – CAUSES AND TREATMENTS

If you're a sports fan, you've probably heard the term "rotator cuff injury" before. A group of muscles and tendons that connect the shoulder blade to the upper arm, the rotator cuff is responsible for stabilizing the arm and giving it its full range of motion. Particularly important to swimmers, pitchers and tennis players, the rotator cuff is also susceptible to injury.

What Causes a Rotator Cuff Injury?

Rotator cuff injuries tend to fall into two categories: acute injuries and repetitive use injuries. Acute injuries can result from situations such as a hard fall or lifting something too heavy. Any repetitive movements – such as overhead throwing – can also put a strain on your shoulder and potentially lead to a rotator cuff injury. In older patients, a rotator cuff injury can be a result of normal wear and tear.

When it comes to warning signs of a rotator cuff tear, the first and most obvious symptom will be shoulder pain. This can range from a dull ache to severe pain, depending on the severity of the injury. Many patients also complain of shoulder weakness and a limited range of motion. While a shoulder injury can certainly be a discouraging experience – especially for athletes – it's important to remember that rotator cuff tears are often treatable.

How Are Rotator Cuff Injuries Treated?

In some cases, a rotator cuff injury will heal on its own. If your doctor suspects this to be the case, he or she may simply recommend icing the injury, getting plenty of rest and taking over-the-counter medications. Physical therapy may also be recommended.

For more serious rotator cuff injuries, a patient may require surgery. Very often, rotator cuff surgery can be performed arthroscopically. A minimally-invasive surgical procedure, shoulder arthroscopy is performed through a series of small incisions. Using a fiber-optic device known as an arthroscope and tiny surgical instruments, a surgeon can reattach the tendon to the bone and remove any loose fragments from the shoulder. Compared with an open procedure, this approach tends to result in a speedier recovery, less scarring and less post-surgical pain. Adhering to a structured physical therapy regimen, many patients make a complete recovery.

Orthopedic Surgeon in Hackensack, Emerson, Elmwood Park and Montclair

If you have any questions about how to properly exercise or how to treat injuries caused by exercise, contact us today to schedule a consultation. To schedule an appointment, please call us at one of our four convenient locations: