

Want to know a little more?

Subacromial Impingement

The shoulder (glenohumeral joint) is one of the most complex joints within the body. It is formed by the humerus (upper arm bone) and the scapula (shoulder blade). The shoulder is supported by many ligaments and muscles which together control shoulder movement.

Of particular interest within the shoulder are the rotator cuff tendons and the subacromial bursa which sit just above the head of the humerus. The rotator cuff muscles are important shoulder stabilising muscles. The bursa is a fluid filled sack which acts as a shock absorber to cushion the rotator cuff tendons from the overlying bone.

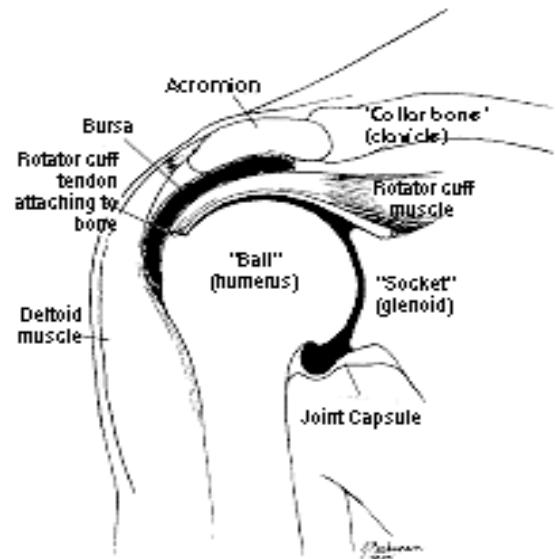


Figure 1

Subacromial impingement occurs when the subacromial bursa and or the rotator cuff tendon are pinched between the head of the humerus and the overlying bone. As a result these structures become inflamed and irritated.

This injury may be caused by repetitive activities such as painting, or it may occur suddenly from falling onto the shoulder. The result is pain and restriction of your shoulder movement especially with reaching up overhead. With rest it may improve a little, however with return to activities the pain returns.

Physiotherapy management of subacromial impingement focuses on regaining normal movements at the shoulder joint. This may involve hands on, stretching and massage at the shoulder and exercises to improve muscle strength and control.

Disclaimer: The information on this page is intended as a guide only, and does not constitute advice or treatment. For further information, please see your qualified physiotherapist

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