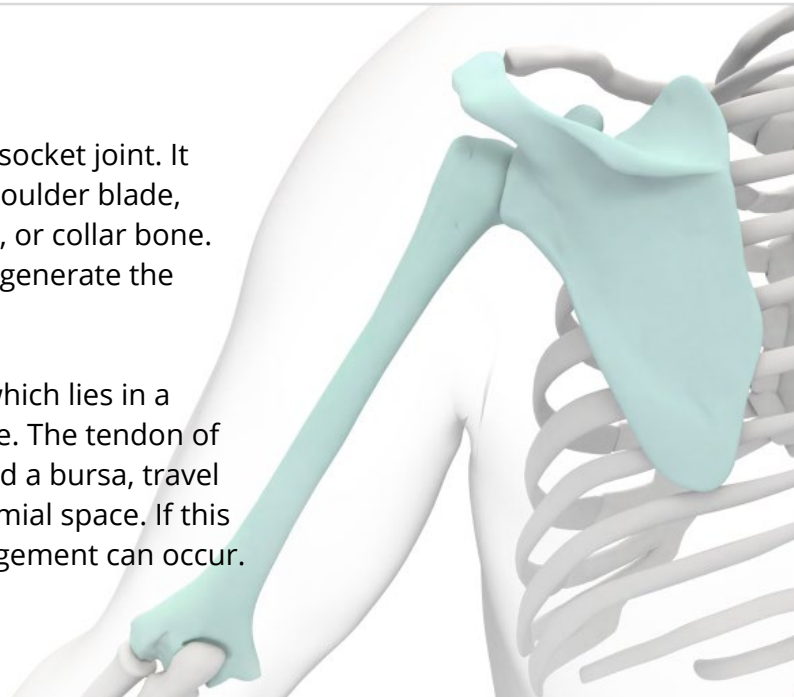


Subacromial impingement

Subacromial, or shoulder impingement presents as pain around the tip of the shoulder, which can spread down the upper arm. Those with impingement will find it painful moving their shoulder, particularly when lifting their arm out to the side or behind their back.

The shoulder joint is a very flexible ball and socket joint. It is formed by three bones: the scapula, or shoulder blade, the humerus, or upper arm, and the clavicle, or collar bone. Numerous muscles connect these bones to generate the movements of the shoulder.

The supraspinatus muscle is one of these, which lies in a depression at the top of your shoulder blade. The tendon of this muscle, along with a fluid filled sac called a bursa, travel through a narrow tunnel called the subacromial space. If this area becomes inflamed or thickened, impingement can occur.



Shoulder impingement can affect anyone, and usually comes about through incorrect or repetitive use of the shoulder. If you have a manual job, or do lots of overhead sports such as swimming or tennis, you may be more prone to developing an impingement.

However, it is not just physical activities that can provoke this condition. Poor posture, rounding your shoulders, narrows this space and increases the likelihood of developing an impingement.

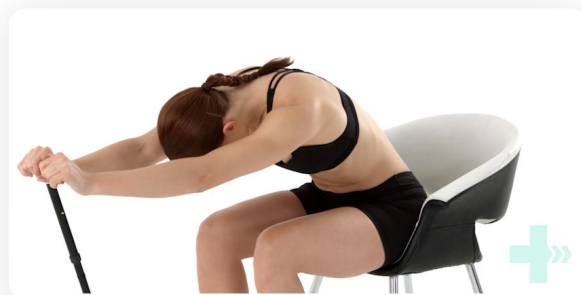


Regardless of your activity, posture is key. Ensure you do not hunch or round your shoulders. Endeavour to keep your shoulder blades back and down, and your neck long, whatever your activity.

Retraining the control of your shoulder through exercises is key to resolving your impingement. However, other modalities are useful adjuncts to your treatment.

Medications such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatories, can help with reducing pain and easing movement.

Use a hot water bottle on the muscles by your neck. This area can often tighten due to the pain, so using heat will help to alleviate this tension.



It is vital that you look at the activities that provoked your pain in the first place. Monitor your posture, review your technique, and take breaks if required, to prevent a recurrence of your shoulder impingement.

Stretching helps to maintain the range of movement in your shoulder, without running too much risk of irritating your symptoms.

Exercises should focus on strengthening your postural muscles, as well as your shoulders stability muscles. This will correct the poor muscular coordination that contributed to the cause of your impingement.

Your clinician will guide you through your exercises at a rate appropriate to your recovery.