

Rotator Cuff Injury

The Rotator Cuff is 4 muscles which form together into tendons:

Supraspinatus / Subscapularis / Infraspinatus / Teres minor

And although not rotator cuff the long head biceps bicipital.

They are muscles/tendons for control and stability, they maintain centralisation of your shoulder joint. They keep the humeral head in place at the shoulder joint and allow full movement of the shoulder. This is quite a common injury.

Symptoms

Clicking when arm is at shoulder height or over head

Shoulder pain that extends from top of shoulder to your elbow

Shoulder pain when lying on your shoulder

Muscle weakness

Pain when attempting to reach or lift

Pain when putting hand behind your back or head

Seek Medical Advice

If you think you may have rotator cuff injury you should get medical advice as soon as you can to stop further damage i.e. shoulder bursitis, larger tear, arthritic shoulder or calcium bone forming in the tendon. The doctor will probably advise an ultra sound and some physio treatment.

Self-Tests

These are tests to self assess if you may have rotator cuff damage:

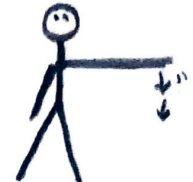
Arm Drop

Weakness in the supraspinatus muscle



Raise the injured arm, extended straight out (to the side) from your body.

Try to slowly lower the extended arm back to your side.



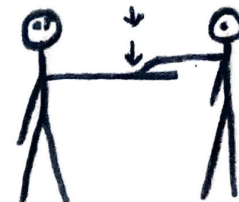
Lower the arm in a very controlled manner.

If lowering the arm from 90 degrees is painful and difficult to complete in a controlled manner, you may have a rotator cuff injury.

Lateral Test

Weakness in the supraspinatus muscle.

Raise the extended injured arm to 90 degrees



Rotate your arm so that your palm faces backwards and your thumb is facing down. Like pouring out a can out.

Ask someone to apply a downward force on that arm, while you resist the force.

If resisting the downward force is difficult and painful, you may have rotator cuff injury.

Back Test

Scapular instability or for a lesion of the subscapularis muscle.

Placing the injured arm behind your back, with the back of your hand resting on your lower back.



Ask someone to apply a force to the palm of your hand, and you should push back against them.

If you feel pain or weakness when trying to push back, you may have a rotator cuff injury.

Physio Exercises

The following movements are to help while you are waiting for physio appointment. They may help to reduce pain. The exercises should be done as a movement exercise not strength and should only be done if there is no pain. **These should not cause any pain if they do please stop.**

1/ Hold on to a side for support

Lean forward

Relax the shoulder so the arm hangs forward

Move the arm side to side, back and forward, then progress to circles



2/ Put hand down on side, Push downwards towards knee

Walk backwards slowly away from table, leaving hand on table, keep hand pushing downwards



3/ Push shoulder blades back towards each other

Scapulars should go towards each other, elbows may go backwards to do this

