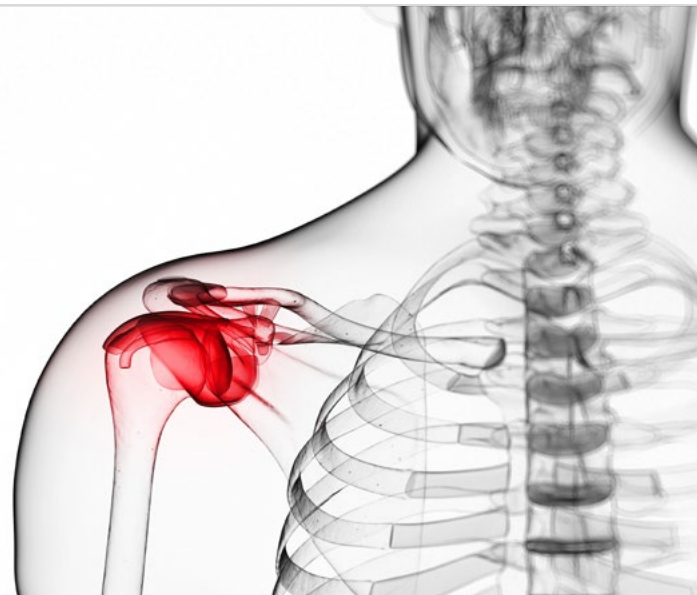


Shoulder instability

Shoulder instability or dislocation is usually a consequence of trauma. The extent of your injury can vary significantly, from weakened muscles at one end of the spectrum, to tissue damage at the other end.

There is usually pain associated with this injury, and a sense of apprehension when using your arm.

The shoulder joint is a very flexible ball and socket joint, formed by three bones: the shoulder blade (or scapula), the upper arm (or humerus), and the collar bone (or clavicle). There are various muscles that support the shoulder to provide it with stability and strength.



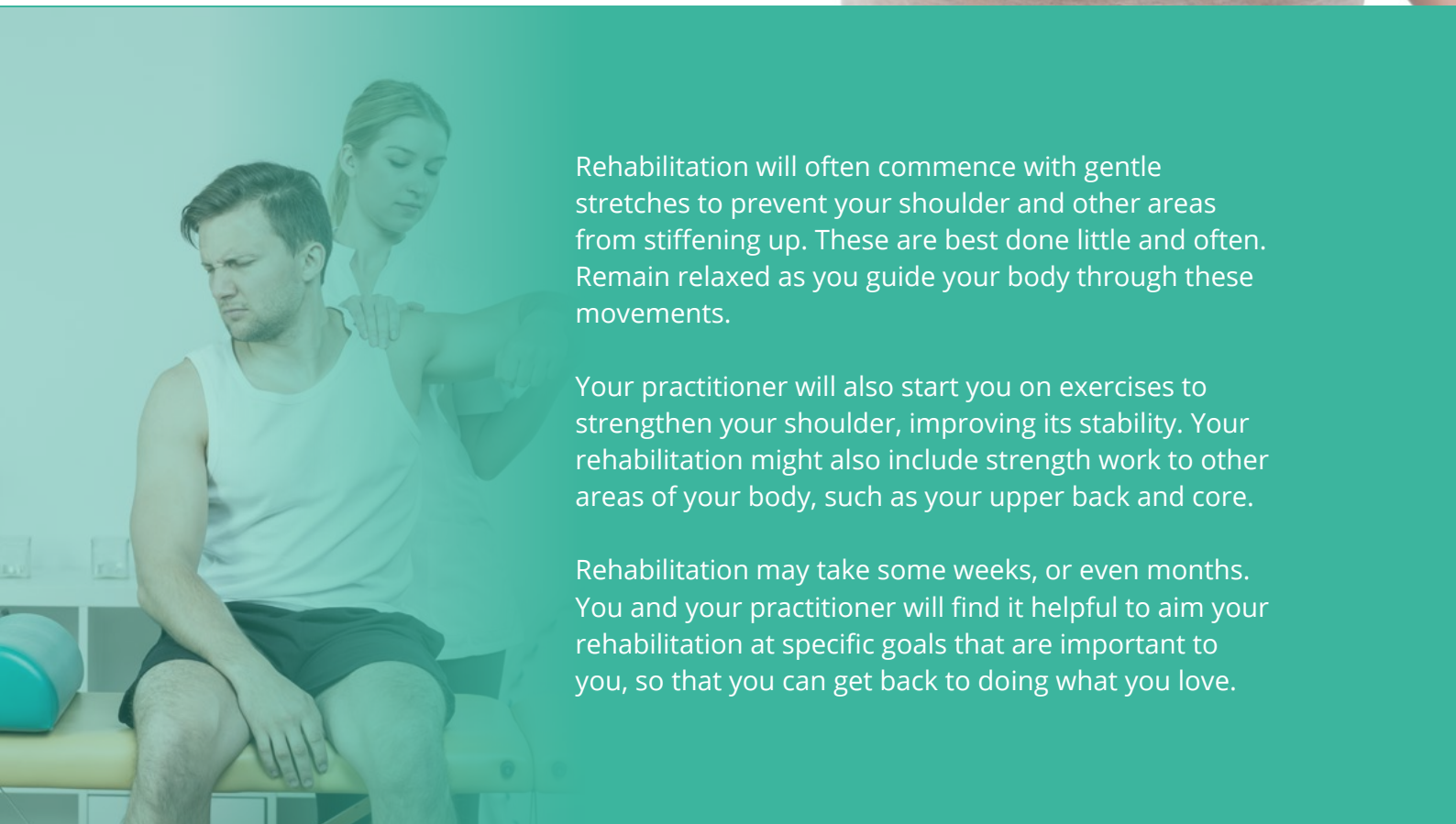
Where the shoulder's flexibility allows a wide range of movements, the trade off means its stability can be lost if there is force. The socket (or glenoid) of the shoulder is deepened by a ring of cartilage called the labrum. Sometimes the labrum can become damaged, reducing stability.

An injury typically associated with sport, instability can occur in any setting where a sudden force is placed upon the shoulder. Once injured, it is vital to address the strength and control of the muscles supporting your shoulder in order to regain your function. The majority of cases of shoulder instability do not require surgical intervention. For the few that do, rehabilitation is still vital to a full recovery.

Depending on your injury, you may be required to wear a sling for the first few days or weeks. The position you hold your shoulder in will form the basis of its successful recovery. Regardless of whether you need a sling, ensure you do not hunch or round your shoulders. This will put your shoulder in a vulnerable position, making the likelihood of developing secondary issues more likely.

Avoid rounding your shoulders, and keep your neck long. You may find it helpful to practice this in front of a mirror.

Constant pain can become a hinderance with detrimental changes to your posture. These changes can lead to secondary aches and pains. Taking appropriate analgesia can help you to avoid these maladaptive postures.



Rehabilitation will often commence with gentle stretches to prevent your shoulder and other areas from stiffening up. These are best done little and often. Remain relaxed as you guide your body through these movements.

Your practitioner will also start you on exercises to strengthen your shoulder, improving its stability. Your rehabilitation might also include strength work to other areas of your body, such as your upper back and core.

Rehabilitation may take some weeks, or even months. You and your practitioner will find it helpful to aim your rehabilitation at specific goals that are important to you, so that you can get back to doing what you love.