

Shoulder Bursitis / Rotator Cuff Syndrome

What is shoulder bursitis?

Shoulder bursitis is an irritation or inflammation of the bursa in your shoulder. A bursa is a fluid-filled sac that acts as a cushion between tendons, bones, and skin.

How does it occur?

The shoulder bursa can become inflamed from repetitive motion of the shoulder. Shoulder bursitis often occurs in sports with overhead activities such as swimming, tennis, or throwing. It may also occur in occupational activities such as painting or carpentry.

What are the symptoms?

You have pain on the outer front side of your shoulder. Your shoulder may hurt when you lift your arm above your head. The outer side of your shoulder may become swollen and may at times feel warm.

How is it diagnosed?

Your health care provider will review your symptoms and examine your shoulder.

How is it treated?

Treatment may include:

- ice packs on your shoulder for 20 to 30 minutes every 3 to 4 hours for 2 to 3 days or until the pain goes away
- anti-inflammatory medication or other pain medications
- an injection of a corticosteroid medication into the bursa to reduce the inflammation and pain

- exercises to help in your recovery.

When can I return to my sport or activity?

The goal of rehabilitation is to return you to your sport or activity as soon as is safely possible. If you return too soon you may worsen your injury, which could lead to permanent damage. Everyone recovers from injury at a different rate. Return to your sport or activity will be determined by how soon your shoulder recovers, not by how many days or weeks it has been since your injury occurred. In general, the longer you have symptoms before you start treatment, the longer it will take to get better.

You may safely return to your sport or activity when:

- Your injured shoulder has full range of motion without pain.
- Your injured shoulder has regained normal strength compared to the uninjured shoulder.

In throwing sports, you must gradually rebuild your tolerance to throwing. This means you should start with gentle tossing and gradually throw harder. In contact sports, your shoulder must not be tender to touch and contact should progress from minimal contact to harder contact.

How can I prevent shoulder bursitis?

Be sure to warm up properly and stretch your shoulder before such activities as throwing, playing tennis, or swimming. If your shoulder begins to hurt during these activities, you may need to slow down until the pain goes away.

Written by Pierre Rouzier, M.D., for McKesson Health Solutions LLC.

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Shoulder Bursitis Rehabilitation Exercises

You may do these exercises when your pain has improved.

- **Scapular range of motion:** Stand and shrug your shoulders up and hold for 5 seconds. Then squeeze your shoulder blades back and together and hold 5 seconds. Next, pull your shoulder blades downward as if putting them in your back pocket. Relax. Repeat this sequence 10 times.
- **Wand exercises**
 - A. **Flexion:** Stand upright and hold a stick in both hands, palms down. Stretch your arms by lifting them over your head, keeping your elbows straight. Hold for 5 seconds and return to the starting position. Repeat 10 times.
 - B. **Extension:** Stand upright and hold a stick in both hands behind your back. Move the stick away from your back. Hold the end position for 5 seconds. Relax and return to the starting position. Repeat 10 times.
 - C. **External rotation:** Lie on your back and hold a stick in both hands, palms up. Your upper arms should be resting on the floor, your elbows at your sides and bent 90°. Using your good arm, push your injured arm out away from your body while keeping the elbow of the injured arm at your side. Hold the stretch for 5 seconds. Repeat 10 times.
- **Isometrics**
 - A. **External rotation:** Standing in a doorway with your elbow bent 90° and the back of your hand pressing against the door frame, attempt to press your hand outward into the door frame. Hold for 5 seconds. Do 3 sets of 10.
 - B. **Internal rotation:** Standing in a doorway with your elbow bent 90° and the front of your hand pressing against the door frame, attempt to press your palm into the door frame. Hold for 5 seconds. Do 3 sets of 10.
- **Tubing exercise for external rotation:** Stand resting the hand of your injured side against your stomach. With that hand grasp tubing that is connected to a doorknob or other object at waist level. Keeping your elbow in at your side, rotate your arm outward and away from your waist. Make sure you keep your elbow bent 90 degrees and your forearm parallel to the floor. Repeat 10 times. Build up to 3 sets of 10.
- **Supraspinatus exercise:** Standing with your arms at your sides and your thumbs pointed toward the floor. Lift your arms up and out from your sides, keeping your elbows straight. Lift your hands only to shoulder level. Hold 5 seconds. Do 3 sets of 10. Gradually add weight to your hands to increase your strength.

Written by Tammy White, M.S., P.T., for McKesson Health Solutions LLC.

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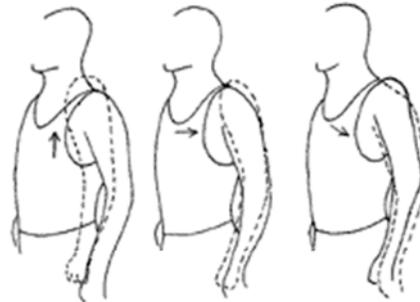
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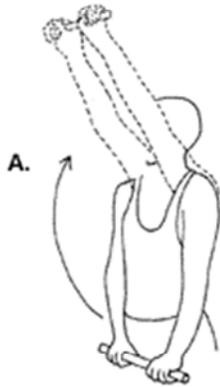
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Shoulder Bursitis Exercises



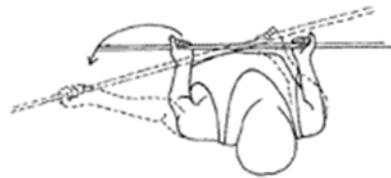
Scapular range of motion



A.

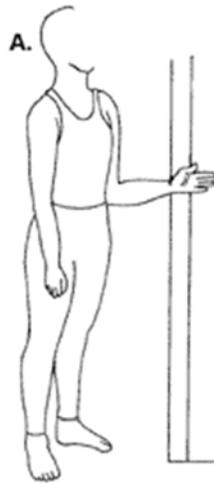


B.



C.

Wand exercises



A.

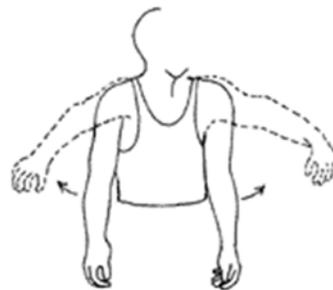


B.

Isometrics



Tubing exercise for external rotation



Supraspinatus exercise

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