

Shoulder Tendinopathy

Tendinopathy is an injury to the shoulder tendon. It can cause swelling, pain and limited range of movement. Injuries can include tendinitis, which is when the tendon becomes inflamed, or tendinosis, which are tiny fissures in the tendon tissue without any significant inflammation in the joint.

Several shoulder tendons work to keep the head of the upper arm bone in position inside of the shoulder socket. Tendinopathy and the ensuing pain might take months to fully resolve.

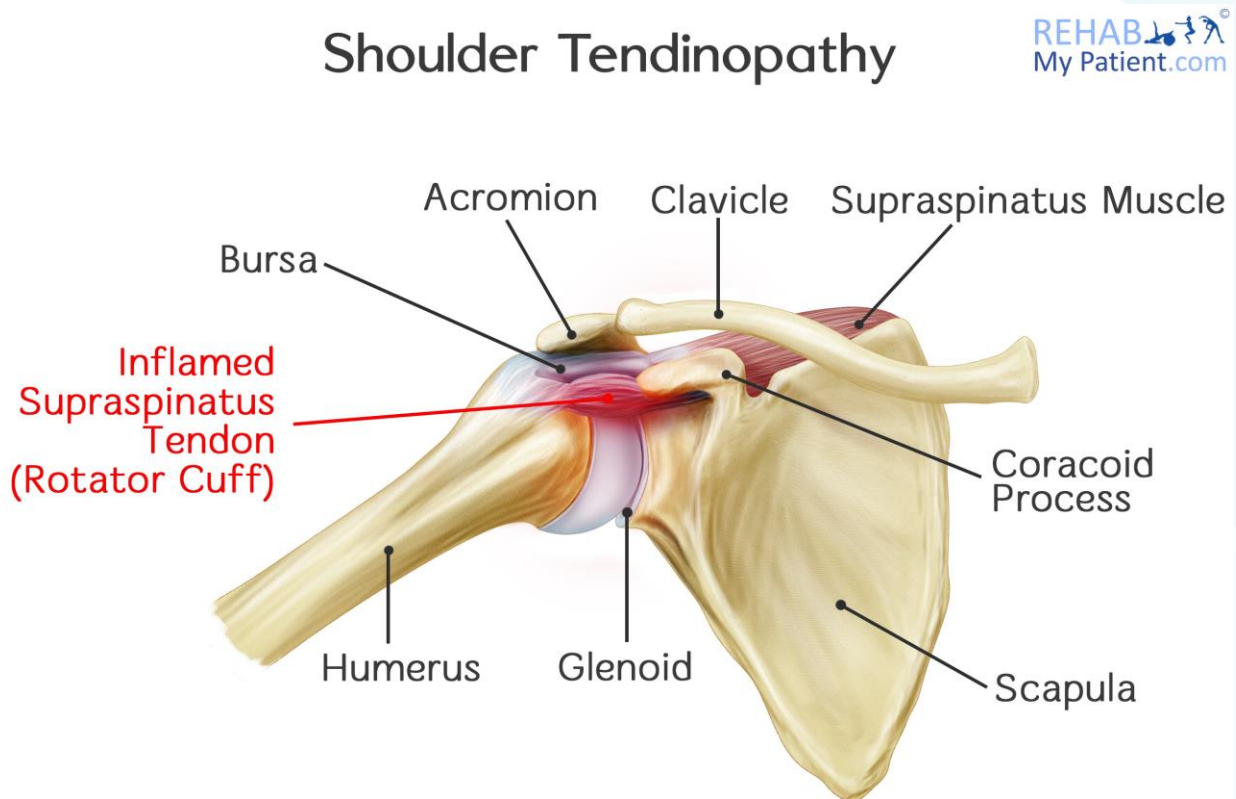
Tendinopathy is often caused by overusing the muscle. Over the course of time, the strain placed on the tendon can cause structural changes within the tendon. Shoulder tendons tend to be overused when repeatedly throwing or reaching overhead.

Shoulder Tendinopathy Anatomy

The most common tendinopathy affects the rotator cuff tendons. In particular, the supraspinatus tendon is very commonly affected. The supraspinatus is one of the rotator cuff muscles, and the tendon connects the muscle to the humerus (upper arm bone). The function of the supraspinatus is to stabilize the shoulder and assist lifting your arm to the side.

When the tendon undergoes excessive repetitive stress, it can become weakened, forming tendinopathy. Some experts believe that inflammation is present, while others disagree.

The rotator cuff tendons are also susceptible to degenerative change, especially in the over-50s. A degenerate tendon is more likely to form tendinopathy and also more likely to form a tear.



How to Treat Shoulder Tendinopathy:

1. Reduce Painful Activities

Refrain from participating in any activities that cause pain in the shoulder. Repetitive actions like hobbies or sports that are affecting it should be reduced.

2. Ice

To control the amount of swelling and pain, apply an ice pack for 5-10 minutes at a time three to five times per day. Make sure to wrap the ice in a thin towel to avoid getting an ice burn on your skin. Discuss the use of ice with your RMP therapist.

3. Anti-Inflammatory Rubs/Gels

Non-steroid anti-inflammatory medication gels or muscle rubs can be used to manage your pain.

4. Steroid Injections

Steroid injections in the bursa that overlies the rotator cuff can help to decrease inflammation.

5. Physical Therapy

Physical therapy is beneficial in strengthening the muscles controlling the shoulder. Exercises work to help you maintain your normal movement range in the joint. Gradually return to work and sporting activities to prevent further complications.



Tips:

- Engage in regular resistance exercises in an effort to strengthen your rotator cuff muscles.
- Make sure to use proper training methods whenever exercising or participating in a sports activity.
- Don't try and ignore pain in the shoulder. Get it treated and don't try to work through it.
- Avoid using your arm too much in an overhead position as that is only going to further aggravate the condition.
- When increasing your exercise duration or intensity, only increase your regimen by about 10 percent every week.
- Change whatever your job requirements are to avoid engaging in any overhead activities that further the pain.