

# Tennis Shoulder

The term tennis shoulder may be referred to a number of different shoulder injuries, caused by playing tennis. One such injury is a labral tear to the shoulder. Another is rotator cuff tendinopathy.

Tennis shoulder injuries are often the result of additional demand being placed on the shoulder motion when serving and doing an overhead stroke. Since tennis is such a competitive and power-oriented sport, bodies have to perform at their highest level. If the demand is more than the body can handle, injuries are going to occur. Rotator cuff injuries tend to be the most common types of injuries for those playing tennis. Swelling and inflammation in the shoulder tendons will occur, as well as having a potential tear in one of the tendons.

The biggest reason why tennis shoulder happens is because of overusing the joint and repetitive movement from raising the arm overhead, as well as the explosive motion from hitting a serve. If you aren't warmed up properly, this injury is quite possible. Not having the proper mechanics for serving and shooting overhead might cause tennis shoulder injuries to occur.

## Tennis Shoulder Anatomy

The two most common types of tennis shoulder are caused by 1. a labral tear. The labrum is the cartilage type rim around the edge of the socket where the ball sits. This socket is known as the glenoid, and the labrum is called the glenoid labrum. Repeated and forceful over-head shoulder movements cause the labrum to tear.

Or tennis shoulder may be referred to 2. a rotator cuff tendinopathy. The rotator cuff muscles surround the shoulder joint and they function to stabilize the shoulder. This helps co-ordinate the arm, prevent too much movement, and stop subluxation of the shoulder. They also help to orientate and depress the scapula. When the rotator cuff tendon is placed under repeated stress over many months, the tendon can become injured or inflamed, known as rotator cuff tendinopathy (or sometimes referred to as tendonitis).

## How to Treat Tennis Shoulder:

### 1. Rest and Rehabilitate

As soon as you start feeling pain in the affected shoulder, you need to refrain from doing any activities that further amplify the pain. Allow the joint the time it needs to properly heal. Get to a sports injury expert, and seek advice on what to do. The sports injury therapist will treat the shoulder and supply you with exercises to strengthen the shoulder muscles.

### 2. Ice

Apply ice to the affected shoulder for 5-10 minutes at a time three to five times per day to help decrease swelling and pain.

### 3. Anti-Inflammatory Medication

An anti-inflammatory medication can help to relieve some of the pain and swelling in the shoulder and provide you with relief. Use only for short term though.

### 4. Cortisone Injections

If other treatments aren't working, an injection of cortisone can help to provide you with relief. This is not a popular option for children, but some adults choose to have this treatment as the results can be quick.

## 5. Surgery

Depending on how severe the injury is, you might need to undergo surgery to repair any torn tendons. This is known as rotator cuff repair. Rehabilitation following surgery is extensive and can take anywhere from 9-12 months.

### Tips:

- Physical therapy using a resistance band can help to strengthen the muscles and tendons in the shoulder. Treatment from sports massage therapists, osteopaths and chiropractors can be very beneficial to improve the mechanics of the upper back and spine (closely related to the shoulder), and to improve posture.
- Make sure and speak to a professional about proper tennis form to minimize injuries.
- Before playing tennis, take the time to warm-up properly.
- Strengthening exercises will help to minimize the chance of injury in your shoulder.
- Properly maintaining your shoulder range of movement and strength will help to decrease the chance of tennis shoulder.