

Triceps Strain

A triceps strain occurs whenever the triceps brachii muscle is put under too much stress, and a small tear in the muscle fibres occurs. The triceps brachii muscle is the larger muscle that is located at the back part of the upper arm. The main function of the muscle is to extend or straighten the elbow but can also extend the shoulder backwards. Triceps strains are relatively common injuries, but only in sports people, and are most common following weight training or gym sessions.

Sudden trauma and stretching of the muscle followed by immediate pain is often a sign of this injury. There might be a popping sound that is heard if there is a tear rather than a strain. Sometimes the strain may not be felt at the time, but only apparent the next day. This is common with weight trainers.

Triceps Strain Anatomy

The triceps are one of the major muscles within the upper part of the arm. It runs along the humerus, which is the main bone within the upper arm, between the elbow and the shoulder. Along with the bicep muscles, they provide you with flexion and extension in the elbow. Whenever the triceps are contracted, the forearm will extend and the elbow will straighten.

The triceps also work to stabilize the shoulder joint at the top part of the humerus, which is a pivotal role in what might otherwise be an unstable shoulder joint. The bottom part of the triceps also work to retract the capsule within the elbow joint when the forearm is extended, which allows the elbow to successfully straighten out.

The triceps has three “heads” at the top of the arm. These are tendons that attach the three parts of the muscle. This has a very useful function for the body... if one tendon is ruptured, the others parts of the muscle can still function.

How to Treat a Triceps Strain:

1. Ice

Apply ice to the affected area for 5-10 minutes three to five times per day to help with pain and swelling. Make sure to wrap the ice with a thin towel to prevent an ice burn from occurring on the skin.

2. Rest

Refrain from participating in any activities that aggravate your triceps. Allowing the muscle time to heal can help to prevent further damage and an extended healing time.

3. Therapy

Physiotherapy and other forms of manual therapy can significantly improve healing rates, and also prevent the problem from happening again.

4. Exercise

Once the pain diminishes, stretch the triceps muscle to help regain movement and flexibility. Strengthening exercises can begin with a gentle resistance isometric extension exercise. You want to perform gently movements every day to prevent any stiffness setting in to the joint. The more you can keep the joint and muscles moving, the better it is going to be for the recovery process. Follow the advice of your therapist.

Tips:

- Anytime you notice an activity is aggravating your muscles and joints, you need to reduce the activity or take some rest days.
- Compression bandages are quite beneficial in helping to minimize swelling and inflammation in the affected area, if the tear is significant.
- Avoid any sudden stretching of the muscles to prevent any unnecessary injuries from occurring.
- If you are lifting weights, you need to make sure you are doing things slowly and properly to prevent an overload on your muscles.
- When participating in sports, make sure to practice proper form and movements to prevent an injury.
- Discuss with your RMP therapist about stretching and strengthening exercises and the best time to do them.

