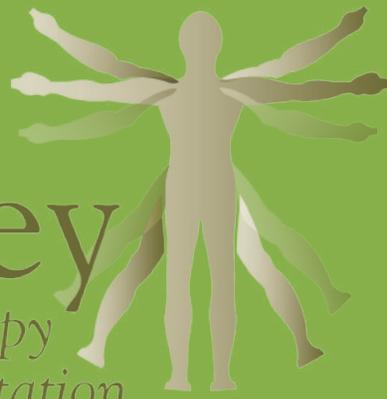


Cawley
*physical therapy
& rehabilitation*



8 Powerful Tips for Instant Relief from Rotator Cuff and Shoulder Pain



1

Keep the injured arm supported during normal daily activities. Whether you're driving, using your computer, or simply relaxing at home, remember that gravity pulls the arm down when it is unsupported. This then increases strain on the rotator cuff. Use a soft pillow or cushion for support when available.

2

Ice along the top of the shoulder daily and as frequently as needed. A frozen bag of veggies such as frozen beans, or peas, or a soft wrap that conforms to the shape of your shoulder are good choices. Be sure to keep the arm supported as mentioned previously while icing. How long do you keep the ice on? Keep it on for 15-20 minutes. It's ok to ice more than once per day if desired based on pain. Icing before bed can also help to improve sleep.

3

Perform cross-fiber massage on the rotator cuff tendons. With your opposite index and middle fingers, massage the front, side, and back of the upper arm just below the tip of the shoulder in a forward to backward direction. Start massaging from the front of the shoulder and spend 1-2 minutes on each spot. Then progress to the side, then the back. Cross-fiber massage helps improve circulation to the tendon and helps decrease inflammation.

4

If at all possible, do not raise the arm overhead unless absolutely necessary. Anything above shoulder level compresses the rotator cuff when the arm is elevated. This then irritates the rotator cuff and further aggravates the condition. You will have to rethink your usual way of getting dressed or even reaching for your seat belt. Ask assistance when placing carry-on baggage in the overhead compartment in the plane.

5

Avoid shoulder press or military press exercises or any exercises that involve lifting any weight overhead. This direction of motion particularly when coupled with heavy weights will further irritate an inflamed rotator cuff tendon. Your pain will be aggravated, and will slow down the healing process.

6

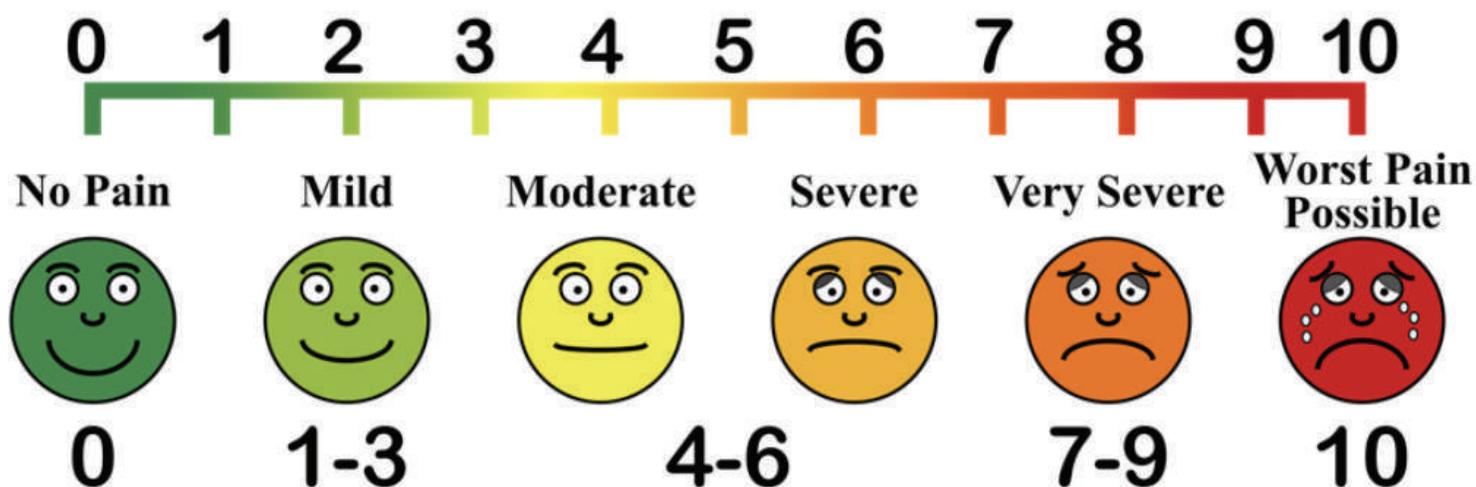
Avoid sleeping on your injured side. Lying on the injured side compresses the rotator cuff tendons, impedes blood flow, and increases inflammation. Use a pillow under the injured arm at night for better support. You should also avoid sleeping with your arms overhead or on your stomach with arm tucked above your head for the same reasons given in item #4. Patients who accidentally lay on their stomach overnight or who sleeps with the arms overhead usually wake up with a throbbing shoulder ache.

7

Perform a gentle rotator cuff strengthening program but only within a pain free range of motion. Remember that it's better to use lower resistance and higher reps when working out your rotator cuff. A smart and well executed gentle rotator cuff strengthening program helps to promote healing, decrease inflammation, and most importantly help you return to your daily activities pain-free. A consistent rehab program will also prevent future injuries and more damage to your shoulder.

8

Seek out the help of your physical therapist in designing a smart and effective rotator cuff program. Most physical therapy practices offer the opportunity for a free pain and injury consultation. You would not even need an order from your physician to get started. Take advantage of this opportunity.



Would you rate your rotator cuff or shoulder pain at a 6, 7, 8, 9 or 10?

If so ...

Call us today to schedule a FREE consultation with one of our Doctors of Physical Therapy!

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