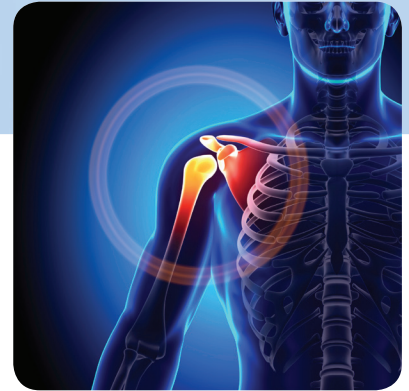




## Shoulder Conditions: OSTEOARTHRITIS OF THE SHOULDER

*Osteoarthritis* is the breakdown of cartilage in the joints. This is followed by chronic inflammation of the joint lining. Healthy cartilage is a cushion between the bones in a joint. Osteoarthritis usually affects the hands, feet, spine, hips, and knees. People with osteoarthritis usually have joint pain and limited movement in the affected joint.



### Causes

The exact cause is unclear.

### Risk Factors

Factors that may increase your chance of developing osteoarthritis include:

- Increasing age
- Excess body weight
- Family history of osteoarthritis
- Certain endocrine, metabolic, or neuropathic disorders, avascular necrosis
- Having an injury or surgery to the joint surface, especially the cartilage
- Having an occupation or doing physical activities that put stress on joints

### Symptoms

Osteoarthritis may cause:

- Mild-to-severe pain in a joint, especially after overuse or long periods of inactivity, such as sitting for a long time
- Creaking or grating sound in the joint
- Swelling, stiffness, limited movement of the joint, especially in the morning
- Deformity of the joint

## Shoulder Conditions: OSTEOARTHRITIS OF THE SHOULDER

### Diagnosis

Your doctor will ask about your symptoms and medical history. A physical exam will be done. Tests may include:

- X-ray to see internal body structures
- CT scan to look at the extent of the arthritis
- Arthrocentesis to rule out other causes of arthritis
- Blood tests to rule out other causes of arthritis

### Treatment

The physical therapy treatment will likely be part of your conservative management program for osteoarthritis. The therapist will focus on maximizing the amount of safe motion that the shoulder can perform and provide education on how to alter your activities to stay within that motion. You will likely be provided with a home exercise program that includes strengthening the uninvolved muscle groups in order to provide support for those that are inflamed or damaged.

If you do need to have surgery, the therapist will follow a specific protocol for safe recovery. A surgery at the AC joint without rotator cuff repair may allow early motion within days of surgery, whereas a total shoulder arthroplasty with rotator cuff repair may prevent all active motion for weeks. The recovery may be uncomfortable but will not be based on the "no pain, no gain" principles because the tissues need time to heal. Pain often means more inflammation and is counterintuitive to health recovery. Be sure to do your home exercise program as instructed by the therapist in order to stay on track in your rehabilitation.

### Prevention

To help reduce your chance of developing osteoarthritis, take these steps:

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Do regular, gentle exercise, such as walking, stretching, swimming, or yoga.
- Avoid repetitive motions and risky activities that may contribute to joint injury, especially after age 40.
- With advancing age, certain activities may have to be stopped or modified. It is important to continue to be active, so find an activity that suits you.