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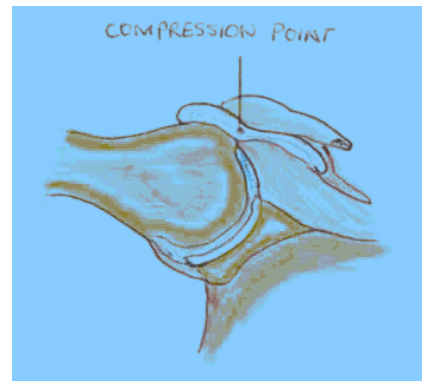
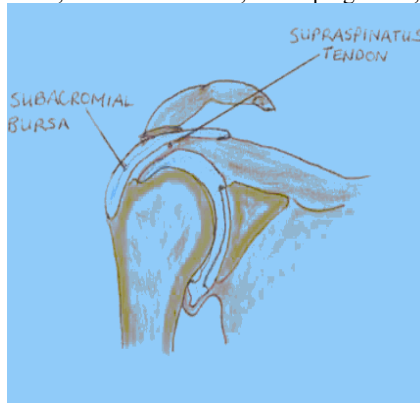
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## Shoulder Impingement

Impingement is one of the most common causes of pain in the adult shoulder. Impingement syndrome occurs when tendons of the rotator cuff and the subacromial bursa (a fluid-filled sac that separates the bones of the shoulder joint) are compressed between the bones of the shoulder.

The rotator cuff is a tendon linking four muscles: the supraspinatus, the infraspinatus, the subscapularis, and the teres minor. These muscles cover the head of the humerus. The muscles work together to lift and rotate the shoulder.

The acromion is the front edge of the shoulder blade. It sits over and in front of the humeral head. As the arm is lifted, the acromion rubs, or "impinges" on, the surface of the rotator cuff. This causes pain and limits movement.



The pain may be due to a "bursitis," or inflammation, of the bursa overlying the rotator cuff or a "tendonitis" of the cuff itself. In some circumstances, a partial tear of the rotator cuff may cause impingement pain.

### Risk Factors

Impingement is common in both young athletes and middle-aged people. Young athletes who use their arms overhead for sports such as cricket, swimming, squash and tennis are particularly vulnerable. Those who do repetitive lifting or overhead activities using the arm, such as shelf packing, construction, or painting are also susceptible. Pain may also develop as the result of minor trauma or spontaneously with no apparent cause.

### Symptoms

Symptoms may initially be mild with patients frequently not seeking treatment at an early stage.

- Minor pain that is present both with activity and at rest
- Pain radiating from the front of the shoulder to the side of the arm
- Sudden pain with lifting and reaching movements
- Athletes in overhead sports may have pain when throwing or serving a tennis ball

The goals of treatment for this condition include

- Reducing the degree of impingement by opening the subacromial space
- Implementing a programme aimed at addressing muscle imbalances around the shoulder to minimise the risk of repeat injury