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One in five Australians have shoulder pain: are you one of them?



by Robert Vander Kraats,
Sport Physiotherapist

SHOULDERS are unique

joints. They are made up of three bones, several ligaments, tendons, and muscles. The shoulder complex is distinctive; the joint has very few connections to the rest of the body. It has a non-existent bony socket, in which the shoulder can move in many different planes of movement.

As it is the most mobile joint in the body, the eight muscles that secure or cause movement of the

shoulder are critically important. Nearly six million Australians see a medical professional every year regarding a shoulder presentation, of which half are rotator cuff pathologies.

The World Health Organisation reports that one in five Australians have chronic shoulder pain. Hence shoulder pain is a common presentation to a physiotherapist, particularly in a private practice. Such a presentation can occur regardless of age, gender, other medical issues or the type of sport.

There are several common presentations, namely: rotator cuff sprains/tears, frozen shoulder, bur-

sitis, impingement, labral (cartilage) tears and subluxations. If you suspect one of these, you should get the pathology confirmed by Robert and Jeff and put a management plan in place.

The common misconception that people have is that often shoulder conditions require surgery. After a thorough assessment, stretches and/or strengthening exercises can be given. These might consist of shoulder blade strengthening work and assisting posture. Specific stretches may also be given to correct an overly forward position of the shoulder.

The cause of some shoulder pain is a referred

pain. For example, a neck issue in which the pain is not felt in the neck region, but rather manifests in the shoulder complex.

Frequently as one ages, osteoarthritis can develop within the shoulder complex. Although this can cause many unwanted symptoms, specific strengthening exercises, often with stretches, may assist.

Strengthening exercises and stretches can be performed in the comfort of your house. Often Robert and Jeff will give you a length of theraband, which is an elastic band that comes in various tensions, for gentle strengthening



An exercise program can be developed to reduce pain

exercises. A demonstration of a rolled up towel or a foam roller is often shown for various stretches.

This is just general infor-

mation, for a comprehensive assessment and diagnosis, phone 9203 7771 or visit www.ngp.net.au to make an appointment with Robert and Jeff today.

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