

# Rotator Cuff Tendinopathy



Polyclinics  
SingHealth



*Disclaimer: Please note that the instructions shown are strictly for general information only.  
If you have any queries, kindly check with your healthcare provider.*



SCAN ME

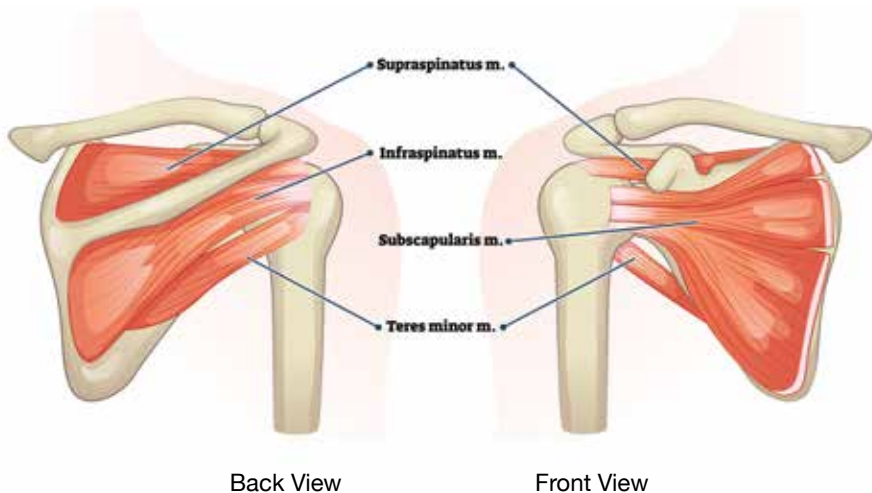
# A

## What is rotator cuff tendinopathy?

The rotator cuff is a group of small muscles that surround the shoulder. They work together to stabilise and move the shoulder.

The condition is caused by irritation and inflammation of the tendons of the rotator cuff muscles.

It can range from mild tendon strain to partial and complete tears of the tendons.



**Shoulder and Rotator cuff**

# B

## What are the common causes of rotator cuff tendinopathy?

Rotator cuff tendinopathy or injury can happen after repetitive overuse of the shoulder, or due to acute injury e.g. lifting load that is too heavy or a fall.



## How can you prevent rotator cuff tendinopathy?

- Always listen to your body, stop the activity if your shoulder hurts. Seek medical advice if the pain persists
- Always warm up before doing sports
- Always progress exercise programme slowly. Begin with light weights and gradually progress to the heavier ones. This will allow the muscles to adapt and prevent injuries
- Modify activities such as placing commonly used heavy items lower on shelf to reduce carrying heavy load above your shoulder or overhead



## What are the signs & symptoms of rotator cuff tendinopathy?

- Painful shoulder movement that worsen with overhead activities
- Tenderness over the shoulder
- Weakened shoulder muscles
- Pain when sleeping on the affected shoulder
- Difficulty in performing daily activities such as dressing or bathing

**Rotator cuff  
tendinopathy**  
Inflamed tendon





## How long does it take to recover?

The outcome is variable depending on the cause and extent of injury, as well as your compliance to the treatment programme.



## You should seek medical attention early if you have...

- Intense shoulder pain or movement restriction following a fall or trauma
- Shoulder pain with difficulty breathing or chest tightness
- Prolonged morning shoulder stiffness
- A hot swollen shoulder joint
- Rapid worsening of shoulder pain
- Accompanying neck and arm pain
- Unexplained weight loss



## Do you need an imaging scan?

Imaging scan is not needed to diagnose Rotator Cuff Tendinopathy. Diagnosis can be made clinically through history and physical examination.






The doctor will evaluate your condition and may order an X-ray if needed, especially when there is trauma or fall.

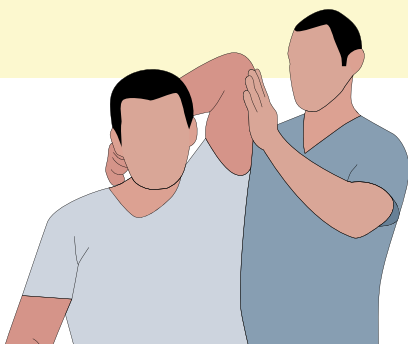
Ultrasound scan, CT scan or MRI may sometimes be ordered by specialists only if necessary.



# What are the treatment options?

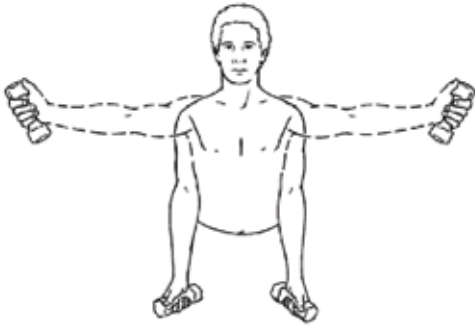
Patients often improve with non-operative treatments. Only a small proportion of patients may require surgery.

Activity modification	Medications	Physiotherapy
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adjust to using a lighter load in your daily activity</li><li>• Reduce repetitive task or overhead movements</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paracetamol and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) can reduce pain and inflammation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appropriate exercise programme can improve your pain and regain your shoulder strength</li><li>• Therapeutic modalities e.g. extracorporeal shockwave therapy (ESWT) or therapeutic ultrasound</li></ul>
Injections	Specialist referral	
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Corticosteroid injections may be used to reduce the inflammation in the rotator cuff tendons if the medications or physiotherapy do not improve the condition</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most rotator cuff tendinopathy can be treated effectively without specialist treatment or surgery.</li><li>• Your doctor will only refer you to see a specialist when necessary for further investigation and treatment.</li></ul>	



## Simple home exercises:

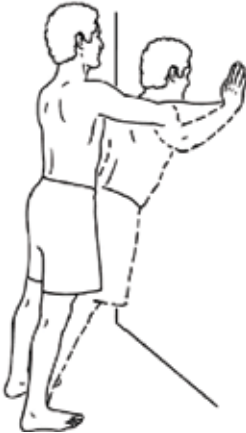
1



2



3



**You may perform these exercises  
2-3 times a week:**

1. Shoulder lateral raise with light weights:  
**10 repetitions x 3 sets**
2. Shoulder press with light weights:  
**10 repetitions x 3 sets**
3. Wall push-ups: **10 repetitions x 3 sets**

[illegible]

Note:

[illegible]