

# ASK US HOW

Our orthopedic experts can help alleviate your shoulder pain.

**Did you know that the shoulder is the most mobile joint in the human body?** Whether you're making three-point shots across the basketball court or pushing a lawn mower, you rely on your shoulders every day to perform a variety of tasks — from leisure activities to household chores. Because the shoulder is the most mobile joint in the body, it's also extremely vulnerable to injury. Swelling, inflammation, tearing or bone changes around the tendons that surround the shoulder joint cause pain whenever you try to move your arm — whether it's above your head, behind your back or straight out in front of your body. Knowing common shoulder conditions, how they're diagnosed and when it's time to see a doctor is crucial to help you prevent shoulder problems or injuries.

## Common Shoulder Conditions

Rotator cuff tendinitis, or the irritation of the tendons surrounding our shoulder from overuse or injury, is the most common cause of shoulder pain. However, other culprits of shoulder pain may be:

- **Arthritis** in the joints around the shoulder, causing a gradual narrowing of the joints and a loss of protective cartilage
- **Bursitis**, or the inflammation of the fluid-filled sac (the bursa) that is responsible for smooth joint movement, causes swelling and pain in the shoulder joint
- **Dislocation** of your shoulder (when the ball-shaped head of your arm comes out of the socket)
- **Fractures** of the shoulder bones
- **Frozen shoulder syndrome**, or extreme muscle and/or connective structure stiffness that occurs when you don't move your shoulder because of pain or injury — making any motion painful or difficult
- **Inflammation of nearby tendons** (specifically those that are connected to the bicep muscles of your arms) typically from overuse or injury

## How are shoulder problems diagnosed?

If you're experiencing shoulder pain, you should see your doctor or orthopedic surgeon as soon as possible. Your doctor will provide a physical examination to assess and diagnose the source of your pain — reviewing your medical history, everyday activities and your current state of pain. During your physical exam, your doctor will ask questions such as:

- Does the pain affect one or both shoulders?
- Does your pain travel from the shoulder to other joints?
- Where in your shoulder do you feel the pain? The front, side or top?
- Does the pain occur when you lift your arm overhead or away from your body?
- Did your pain start suddenly? Is it severe? Or did it begin slowly and mildly and then get worse?

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# LIFE-CHANGING ORTHOPEDICS

Depending on the results of your physical examination, it's likely that your doctor will perform diagnostic tests such as x-rays, ultrasounds and magnetic resonance if he or she believes your shoulder condition lies within the bones or tissues. Your initial treatment(s) may include the following:

- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) to reduce pain and ease inflammation
- A corticosteroid injection, most commonly injected into the joints, to relieve pain and reduce inflammation

- Referral to a physical therapist to help find the best form of rehabilitation for you
- Surgery, if recommended by your doctor

At Reading Hospital, we offer a variety of options to treat shoulder pain, both surgically and non-surgically. From pain management services and strengthening exercises to shoulder replacement and physical therapy, our nationally recognized team is dedicated to getting you back to your everyday activities without joint pain.

Discover the ways our award-winning orthopedic team can help you achieve victory over your joint pain at [RHOrtho.org](https://www.rhortho.org).

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