

What You Need To Know About:

Shoulder Pain

Tennis Elbow

Osteoarthritis

Lower Back Pain

Headaches

Exercise Can Prevent Falls

SHOULDER PAIN

Shoulder is a highly mobile joint, which gives us the ability to move it through a large range of movement. This is very useful in many activities of daily living, especially those which require our arms to be raised above our head.

Because of its high level of mobility, the shoulder has heavy reliance on the muscles around the shoulder to act as dynamic stabilizers during movements of the arm. Weakness of these stabilizing muscles in combination with structural abnormalities or biomechanical faults make the shoulder particularly prone to pain and injury.

WHAT CAUSES SHOULDER PAIN?

- Rotator cuff strains/tears/ tendinitis/impingement
- Shoulder joint instability or dislocation
- Shoulder bursitis
- Fractures of the clavicle (collar bone), or scapula (shoulder blade)
- Adhesive capsulitis (frozen shoulder)
- Biceps tendinitis
- Referred pain from the neck and thoracic spine
- Nerve entrapments
- Muscle imbalance

PHYSIOTHERAPY CAN HELP

Depending upon the cause and type of pain, physiotherapists treat shoulder pain in a variety of ways:

- Early mobility if indicated
- Mobilization and other manual therapy techniques
- Taping
- Stretching and strengthening exercises
- Specific stabilization exercises
- Postural exercises
- Ergonomic advice
- Modalities such as laser and Ultrasound to control the pain
- Acupuncture

In the early stages of shoulder injury, ice, rest and avoidance of overhead activities can be beneficial. Anti-inflammatory medication helps during the acute phase as can specific exercises by your physiotherapist. The physiotherapist's aim is to build the shoulder muscles and restore its normal function as possible. Even if one tendon is torn (usually rotator cuff tear) the remaining muscle groups can compensate and maintain motion and strength.

TENNIS ELBOW

Tennis elbow is a blanket term used to describe a few conditions all of which cause pain around the elbow.

WHAT CAUSES TENNIS ELBOW?

- Poor sports technique (such as a tennis back hand stroke)
- Occupational tasks involving repetitive movements of the wrist and hands
- Degeneration either as a primary cause, or secondary to injury
- Injury either as a primary cause or secondary to degeneration

SYMPTOMS & SIGNS

- Tenderness over the lateral aspect of the forearm which may radiate into the forearm
- Decreased grip strength and pain on gripping
- Pain on stretch of forearm muscles
- May disturb sleep when severe
- Chronic states
- The condition may be irritable (can be "stirred up" easily)

WHY DOES IT TAKE THIS LONG TO GET BETTER?

Tears to the tendon of the muscle and /or inflammatory changes as a result of aging, repeated overuse, or trauma, contribute to degeneration of the tendon. Naturally poor blood supply to the area, prolongs healing, as does repeated use and failure to rest.

PHYSIOTHERAPY CAN HELP

Treatment of tennis elbow aims at reducing pain and inflammation, promoting the healing process, and regaining normal strength and flexibility. No single treatment technique has been proven totally effective in all cases. Therefore, tennis elbow often requires a combination of treatment techniques.

SOME OF THE METHODS IN USE TO TREAT THE CONDITION INCLUDE:

- Rest, Ice, Massage
- Ultrasound
- Myofascial release
- Mobilization
- Bracing and taping
- Acupuncture
- Strengthening and stretching exercises
- Medication, anti-inflammatory
- Injections like corticosteroids

OSTEOARTHRITIS

Arthritis is wear and tear of joints. Some degree of osteoarthritis is normal with aging.

SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS

- Recurring pain or tenderness in a joint
- Stiffness, particularly early morning stiffness
- Swelling in a joint
- Obvious redness or heat in a joint
- Inability to move a joint

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Avoid jerky/sudden movements
- Don't overload joints
- Take care with lifting
- Watch your weight
- Use splints or walking aids as advised
- Use labour saving devices
- Don't overdo activity or exercises

PHYSIOTHERAPY CAN HELP

Physiotherapists can individually assess and devise a program of treatment and exercise to suit your condition. Treatment will help to:

- Reduce pain
- Improve circulation
- Improve movement and posture
- Strengthen muscles
- Improve independent function

Gentle regular exercises such as swimming, exercising in water (hydrotherapy), walking or cycling are recommended.

Rest is also an important part of managing your osteoarthritis. Usually rest is balanced with exercises and activity. In particular rest is required when joints are HOT, SWOLLEN or PAINFUL.



LOWER BACK PAIN

WHAT CAUSES BACK PAIN?

- Postural stress
- Muscle strains & Ligament sprains
- Disc Problems
- Sciatica
- Arthritis

HOW TO PREVENT BACK PAIN

Here is some useful advice to help you prevent back pain:

- **Lifting:** With your feet shoulder –wide apart, bend at the hips and knees. Grip the load firmly and hold it close to your body, tighten your stomach muscles and use the strong muscles of your legs to lift. Keep your back as straight as possible. Avoid twisting, turn by moving your feet, not your back
- **Posture:** Think tall: chest lifted, shoulders relaxed, chin tucked in and head level, posture should be stable, balanced and relaxed when sitting, walking or standing
- **Sitting:** Don't stay seated for too long, stand up, stretch and walk around. The right back support will also help
- **Exercise:** Stay in shape, healthy body weight is less strain on your back. Your physiotherapist can show you how to keep your back flexible and strong with correct back and abdominal exercises
- **Driving:** Good support from your car seat will prevent back pain. If you need more lower back support, use a lumbar roll or a rolled up towel
- **Sleeping:** Your mattress should be firm enough to support your natural shape.

PHYSIOTHERAPY CAN HELP

- Advice and early activation(recent research indicates that one of the most important treatments for lower back pain is that the patient is encouraged to move)
- Mobilization and other manual therapy techniques
- Specific stabilization exercises
- General exercises
- Traction
- Ergonomic advice

Physiotherapists have extensive training in the management of musculoskeletal disorders and have more ways to help your back move well and stay well.



Gita Mikal, B.Sc, P.T, MCPA, CAFCI

physiotherapy

AT DON MILLS

Suite 211 - 6 Maginn Mews
Shops at Don Mills
Toronto, ON M3C 0G9

phone 416-444-4800
fax 416-444-4811

www.physioatdonmills.com



HEADACHES

Headaches are often caused by disorders of the neck or physical and emotional tension. Physiotherapists can successfully treat this type of headaches and show you how to prevent the pain recurring.

A disorder of the upper neck joints or muscles can cause referred pain to your head.

Any of the following points suggest that your neck may be causing the headache:

- Headache associated with neck pain
- Headache with dizziness or light-headedness
- Headache brought on or worsened by neck movement or staying in the same position for a long time
- Headache eased by pressure to the base of the skull
- Headache which persists after your doctor has checked for other causes

HEADACHES FROM OTHER CAUSES

Emotional tension and anxiety can cause the muscles at the base of the head and jaw to become very tight, irritating the nerves and restricting blood flow which produces a headache.

PREVENTING HEADACHES

Here is some useful advice to help you prevent headaches:

- **Posture:** Think tall; chest lifted, shoulders relaxed, chin tucked in and head level. Your neck should feel strong, straight, and relaxed
- **Work:** Avoid working with your head down for long periods. Stretch and change position frequently
- **Sleep:** A down pillow or water pillow is best for most people.
- **Exercise:** Keep your neck joints and muscles flexible and strong with correct neck exercises. Your physiotherapist can show you how.
- **Relaxation:** Recognize when you are tense. You may be hunching your shoulder or clenching your teeth without realizing it.



PHYSIOTHERAPY CAN HELP

Your physiotherapist will be able to determine if your neck is causing the headaches. If so, they can offer you self-help advice on ways to correct the cause of headaches, such as practical tips for work and in the home, adjusting furniture, relaxation and exercise.

Physiotherapists may also use:

- Mobilization
- Acupuncture
- Massage
- Remedial exercise
- Laser, ultrasound, and other treatments

EXERCISE CAN PREVENT FALLS

It used to be thought that falls were an inevitable part of ageing. Luckily, it is now clear that falls can be prevented with well-designed exercise programs.

FALL FACTS

One in three people aged 65 and over falls at least once each year.

HOW CAN FALLS BE PREVENTED?

Studies have found that falls can be prevented by strategies that include a mix of exercise, medication reviews, and environmental modification.

WHAT IS THE BEST SORT OF EXERCISE?

In a recent review of the research it was evident that the programs with the biggest effect on falls included exercises which aim to improve balance and strengthening. Some people like to exercise in a group and others prefer to exercise alone.

As long as the exercise aims (safely) to improve your balance and you can keep going with the exercises it does not matter where you choose to exercise. Tai Chi in a group has been found to prevent falls and is a good option, as is a group program run by a physiotherapist or kinesiologist. A home program of balance and strength exercise has also been shown to prevent falls and could be designed by your physiotherapist.



WHAT ELSE HELPS?

Research has also found that a home assessment with advice from an Occupational Therapist can prevent falls, as can the removal of cataracts and the cessation of sleeping tablets. Your physician could refer you to appropriate practitioners.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

For a small number of people there may be a medical reason for their falls (e.g., a problem with the heart's rhythm) and this needs investigation by your doctor. If you are new to exercise or have a major health condition you should consult your doctor before starting a program.

Once the way is cleared medically, we suggest that all older people should undertake an exercise program designed to safely improve their balance. The exact form of this program will depend on your preferences and individual situation. Older adults who have already had a fall should also consider a home assessment.

Physiotherapy at Don Mills offers small group exercises aiming to increase general strength and balance.

