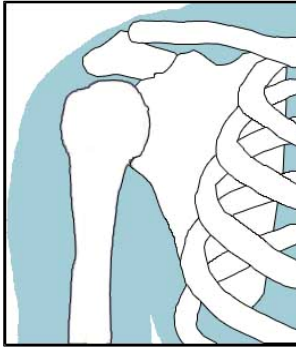


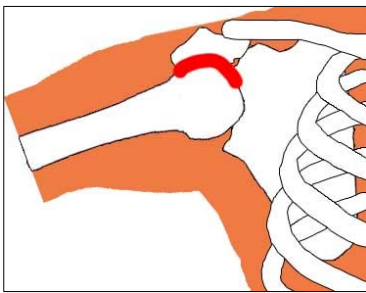
The Shoulder Joint:

The shoulder joint is a ball and socket joint that has a ligament above it that forms an arch. The ligament attaches to bony prominences (the acromium and coracoid) on your shoulder blade.



The shoulder is surrounded by a deep layer of tendons that helps stabilise the joint by keeping the ball firmly in the socket. This is called the rotator cuff and one of these tendon passes under this arch. Certain movements reduce the space under this arch and this, if done repeatedly, can result in trauma to the structures within it.

This can occur with activities such as sitting at a computer desk that is badly set up. Other common causes are imbalances in key muscle groups that reduce the available space. This can be caused by the ball not sitting centrally in the socket or the shoulder blade tilting forward too much.



This repetitive 'catching' can lead to increased swelling that can reduce the space further, causing a vicious circle. Common structures that can get irritated are the supraspinatus tendon or a cushion of fluid called a bursa.

How does physiotherapy help?

Initially the treatment goals are to decrease any inflammation and reduce any muscle spasm. This may require mobilisation of the joint and soft tissue work. Exercises may be required if you are weak or tight in certain areas to strengthen and stretch appropriately to ensure optimal biomechanics. This will stop the recurrent catching. Proper rehabilitation will enable good healing and recovery in the shoulder so that the pain stays away and does not return. Your Premier Physiotherapist will thoroughly assess you to what is appropriate.

It is also vital to identify the activity that may have contributed to the problem as unless this is addressed, it is unlikely to get better. In many cases the computer work station may need to be assessed.

Injections

In some cases it may be appropriate for an injection from a consultant. This is used only if pain is extremely severe and patients are not able to exercise. However this is used alongside physiotherapy to ensure that the shoulder is moving correctly and does not start to catch again.