

Does Shoulder Pain Keep You Awake at Night?



If you have trouble sleeping at night due to shoulder pain, you are probably experiencing symptoms of shoulder damage: stiffness, general weakness in your shoulder and an inability to do daily activities (such as reaching above your head or combing your hair) without pain. Among the most common causes of such pain are shoulder impingement and rotator cuff injury.

Your shoulder is a modified ball and socket joint that allows your arm to move up, down, forward, backward, sideways or in a circular motion. When the shoulder muscles or bones become damaged or injured, pain and weakness result.

Impingement is common in those who do repetitive lifting or overhead activities like swimming or tennis.

People who paint or do construction work are also vulnerable to impingement. Tears in the rotator cuff muscles affect 25% of people older than 60. Other factors that can increase your risk for shoulder injury include

- **Previous shoulder injury;**
- **Degeneration and arthritis due to aging;**
- **Irregularities in muscles or bones that increase wear on the rotator cuff tendons;**
- **Long-standing rotator cuff tendonitis; and**
- **Shoulder instability.**

Your physician will diagnose your problem through x-rays or an MRI (magnetic resonance image). He or she may prescribe rest and limit any activities or repetitive movements that may further injure your shoulder. Alternating ice and heat may relieve pain and inflammation; your physician may also prescribe nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs— aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen) or cortisone injections. In many cases, physical therapy may be beneficial.

When nonsurgical treatment does not relieve pain, surgery may be recommended to repair rotator cuff tears and remove the impingement so the shoulder moves smoothly. After surgery, a rehabilitation program can **rebuild strength** and **regain motion** in your shoulder.

Be sure to see your physician if shoulder pain prevents you from getting a good night's sleep!