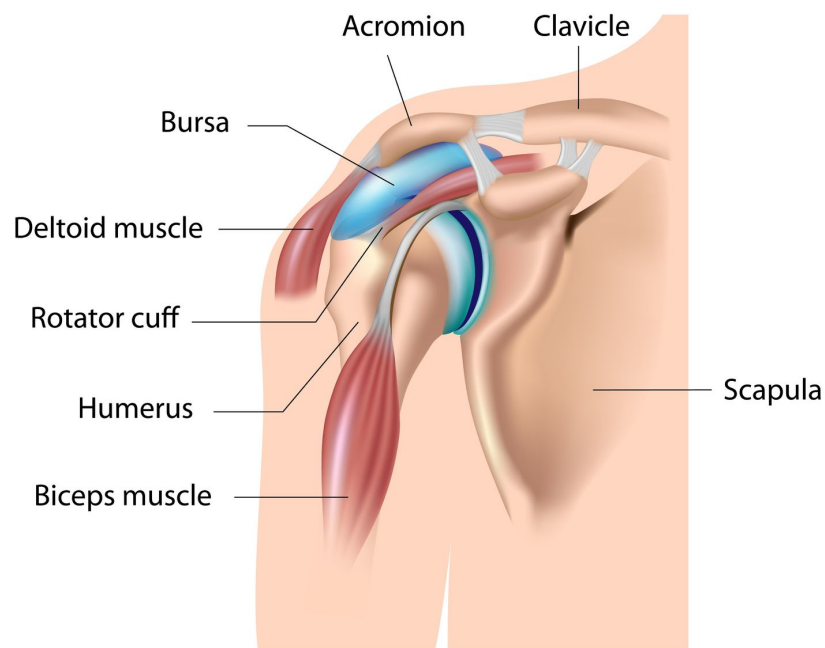


Shoulder Impingement Syndrome

Shoulder impingement is one of the most frequent causes of shoulder pain. Impingement syndrome occurs when the tendons of the rotator cuff and the bursa in the shoulder get pinched or impinged by the bones of the shoulder. The bones that border this space are the acromion of the scapula superiorly, and the humeral head inferiorly. The area the rotator cuff tendons pass through is called the subacromial space. The subacromial space is narrow and when the space is decreased further impingement occurs. This can happen as a result of overhead activities, such as reaching, painting, tennis, baseball or other overhead sports. Repetitive overhead activity increases the likelihood of shoulder impingement. Impingement syndrome can also be caused by poor posture, overuse, trauma, degenerative changes of the AC joint, or any activity when the subacromial space becomes narrowed. The impingement on the rotator cuff muscles causes the rotator cuff tendons to become irritated and inflamed, causing pain.



Impingement syndrome tends to cause pain over the anterior shoulder. Pain may be evident in mid-range of shoulder flexion or when the shoulder is fully flexed or raised, such as when putting on a shirt. If pain is severe enough it may also radiate down the arm. A grinding or popping sensation may occur with movement to the affected shoulder, due to the close proximity of tissues. Typically with shoulder impingement there will be weakness in the shoulder muscles, causing daily activities to be limited. If the impingement has been going on for a long time or the injury is severe, the tendons of the rotator cuff may tear.

Physical therapy can be very helpful in the treatment of impingement syndrome. Diagnosis for impingement syndrome begins with a thorough history and physical evaluation of the affected shoulder. The physical therapists at Lakeshore Physical Therapy will assess shoulder range of motion, strength, and perform special tests to determine if the cause of pain is due to impingement. Education and correction of faulty posture may also be performed to decrease stress in the area of narrowing, also known as the subacromial space. Physical therapy treatments will focus on shoulder and scapular strengthening, improving posture and shoulder range of motion (ROM), and decreasing pain for return to sport and daily activities.