

## **What is Causing Your Shoulder Pain? Arthritis? How to Tell.**

Shoulder arthritis is damage to the cartilage inside the shoulder joint. The damage may be done to the cartilage on the ball of the shoulder joint or the socket of the shoulder joint. The cartilage is like a Teflon coating on the joint.

Shoulder arthritis is a gradual wear and tear of the cartilage. You can also get arthritis in the acromioclavicular joint. This is the joint at the end of your clavicular.

### **Signs and Symptoms of Shoulder Arthritis**

1. Pain in the shoulder joint (front, side, or back). Pain worse with leaning on arm, carrying, lifting, or exercising with arm. This is especially true with lifting or carrying heavy objects. Pain can refer all the way into elbow and wrist (if severe). When your pain refers down the arm it generally indicates your shoulder arthritis is getting worse or more flared up. Once the shoulder is flared up the shoulder may hurt even at rest.
2. Stiffness in your shoulder joint is a common sign of shoulder arthritis. We will demonstrate to you how to compare one shoulder's motion to another.
3. Sounds of grinding, clicking, or cracking are common with shoulder arthritis. The cartilage (Teflon Coating) has begun to wear and it has become irregular (no longer smooth). Sometimes the shoulder can even feel like it is locking up.

If your shoulder motion is limited due to arthritis it often follows a pattern.

Shoulder external rotation is the worse, followed by shoulder abduction, and finally the third most affected shoulder internal rotation.

How to measure:

1. Shoulder External Rotation: Lie on your back. Bend elbow to 90 degrees and place by your side. Turn hand out and compare to opposite arm.

2.



3. Shoulder Abduction. Lie on back. Slide affected arm out to side raise your affected arm up from side as far as motion allows. Compare to other side.



4. Shoulder Internal Rotation. Lie on back and bring arm out to side (approximately right angle). Bend elbow to a right angle. Allow palm to drop forward. Compare to opposite side.



To repeat- with arthritis, the first measurement “shoulder external rotation” tends to be the worse. The second most affected tends to be “shoulder abduction”. The third most affected tends to be “shoulder internal rotation”.