

## **Is Your Shoulder Pain Coming from Your Neck or Shoulder? How to Tell.**

It is important to determine if your shoulder pain is being caused by a problem in your neck.

Neck problems can often cause pain into the shoulder area. We provide these guidelines to help assess where your shoulder pain is coming from.

As a rule, shoulder movements will aggravate shoulder problems. Neck movements tend to aggravate neck problems.

Location of the pain: Pain from the shoulder is often felt on the front or side part of the shoulder. The shoulder pain may radiate down the arm but generally not past the elbow. We have seen severe cases of shoulder pain where the pain does extend into forearm or even to the wrist. But it is not too common.

Pain originating from the shoulder generally does not extend above the point of the shoulder into the neck or to the shoulder blade.

Pain from the neck can be felt at the base of the neck, in the shoulder blade, and in the arm all the way into the hand. You may also feel some numbness or tingling with neck issues (this will not happen with shoulder pain).

### Tests: Shoulder and Neck

Stand or sit with very straight posture. Move your shoulder in the following directions:

1. Slowly lift your arm straight forward and reach as high as you are able (5x).



2. Slowly lift your arm out to the side and raise it as high as able (5x).



3. Slowly reach your arm behind you and attempt to touch your shoulder blade of your opposite arm.



See Photos.

If any of these movements recreate your typical shoulder pain, the pain may be a result of a shoulder problem.

Stand or sit with very straight posture. Move your neck in the following directions.

1. Slowly flex your neck forward and then back as far as it will go (10x).



2. Rotate your head to the right and then to the left (10x).



3. Bend your head to the right and then to the left (10x).



If any of these movements recreate your typical shoulder pain, a neck issue may be contributing to your shoulder pain. If the neck movements have no effect on your shoulder pain, it is less likely that the neck is causing your shoulder pain.

Warning it is very possible you could have neck AND shoulder problems. Which is why we recommend seeing a qualified healthcare professional.