

## What is Causing Your Shoulder Pain? Rotator Cuff Tear? How to Tell.

There are four muscles that make up the “rotator cuff” of the shoulder. The four muscles work together to move the shoulder and stabilize the shoulder. Each of these four muscles have a tendon by which it attaches to bone. When a tear occurs in one of the rotator cuff muscles, it happens in the tendon.

Most tears in the rotator cuff tendons occur from a gradual wearing down of the tendon. This may occur during impingement (or pinching) of the shoulder tendon.

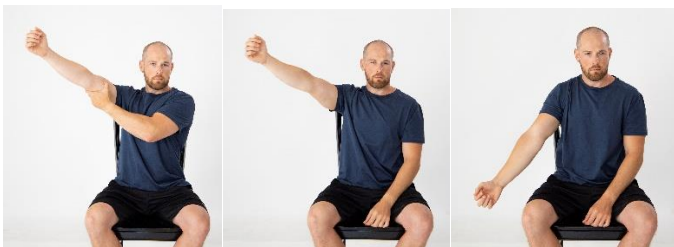
Tears can be “partial” which means the tendon is damaged but not completely severed. Tears can also be complete, which often means the tendon is torn from where they are attached to the bone.

Common Symptoms of a Rotator Cuff Tear:

1. Pain over the side aspect of the upper arm (police patch area)
2. Pain and weakness when lifting the arm in a certain way.
3. Pain while resting and at night. Painful to sleep on affected shoulder.
4. Cracking or popping sound or sensation when you move the shoulder in a certain way.

TESTS (For your knowledge only-have your shoulder assessed)

1. Drop Arm: Lift your painful arm to the side using the nonpainful arm. Let the painful go and see if you can hold the position without dropping the arm or shrugging.



2. Place both elbows at your side. Bend the elbows to a right angle. Have a second person attempt to push both arm toward each other at the same time. A shoulder with a rotator cuff tear may give away.



3. Place the arm of your painful shoulder behind your back with the back of your hand resting against your low back or pelvis. Attempt to lift the arm away from your low back. A second person may apply some resistance against the hand if needed. If lifting the arm or receiving some resistance to the arm causes pain, you may have a rotator cuff tear.