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Shoulder Pain While Swimming



With the warmer months approaching quickly, swimming can be a great form of exercise that is often underutilized because of NJ's longer cold season. Swimming is an excellent cardiovascular exercise used to strengthen the muscles of the heart and improve endurance.

Excessive swimming can cause some shoulder overuse injuries due to the repetitive and overhead nature of the motion. The most common shoulder injury for new swimmers is rotator cuff tendonitis, which is sometimes referred to as "Swimmer's Shoulder." This condition mostly affects new swimmers who don't build up their tolerance to the activity, or long-distance swimmers while training for an event.

The "crawl" aka "freestyle" can cause inflammation of the shoulder tendons due to the extra forces when the arm is pulling through the water against resistance and also the recovery phase of the stroke.

Common signs of this specific injury are pain in the front or back of the shoulder while reaching overhead, decreased in shoulder range of motion, and decrease in strength. Poor posture with sitting can exacerbate these symptoms.



Prevention

Prior to returning to the pool, keep in mind that proper warm ups and stretching can help prevent repetitive use injuries like Swimmers Shoulder.

If you notice shoulder pain following increase in volume in swimming, you should immediately seek advice from a physical therapist to help prevent further injury. The quicker the symptoms are managed, the easier they are to control.

As your physical therapists, we can help determine the cause of the problem, and develop a strategy to minimize or eliminate shoulder pain.

Call CORE Physical Therapy and Sports Performance to schedule a visit with one of our highly trained physical therapists.

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