

IMPINGEMENT

Impingement is a condition of the shoulder in which two main bones in the shoulder joint, the humeral head and acromion, come into contact with each other or 'impinge' (Figure 1).

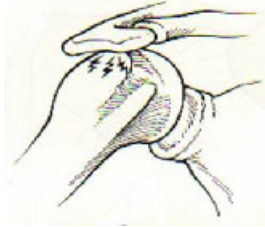


Fig. 1 Impingement

The common symptoms of impingement are pain with overhead activities and night pain.

It is common in older overhead athletes or people who do a lot of overhead work and is also related to tiring of the main muscles and tendons in the shoulder, the rotator cuff.

Everyone has a different shaped acromion and those people with a very curved or hooked acromion are more prone to impingement. On your x-rays it is sometimes called a bony spur (Figure 2-arrow).

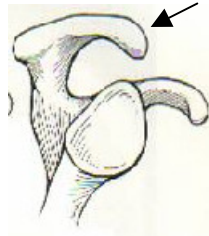


Fig. 2 Hooked acromion

Treatment of impingement begins with an injection of local anaesthetic and corticosteroid, followed by a shoulder exercise program (Figure 3 and 4).

If the treatment has been unsuccessful, or the problem returns; then surgery is sometimes recommended and an orthopaedic shoulder specialist should be consulted.



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

The surgery for treatment of impingement is done by 'keyhole' or arthroscopic surgery and involves removing the hooked end of the acromion bone which allows for increased space in the joint for movement (Figure 5 and 6).



Fig. 5 Arthroscope



Fig. 6 Acromioplasty