

Shoulder Arthritis

Diagnosis Explanation:

Shoulder arthritis is the **degeneration of the cartilage in the shoulder joint**, leading to **pain, stiffness, and reduced mobility**. It can occur in the **glenohumeral joint (ball-and-socket joint)** or the **acromioclavicular (AC) joint**. The most common types include:

- **Osteoarthritis (Wear-and-Tear Arthritis)** - Gradual cartilage breakdown due to aging or overuse.
- **Rheumatoid Arthritis (Autoimmune)** - The immune system attacks the joint lining, causing inflammation.
- **Post-Traumatic Arthritis** - Develops after a shoulder injury (fracture, dislocation).

Symptoms:

- **Deep aching pain** in the shoulder, worse with activity.
- **Morning stiffness** or after periods of rest.
- **Clicking, grinding, or catching** in the joint.
- **Loss of range of motion**, especially reaching overhead.
- **Weakness** and difficulty lifting objects.

Specific Work Modifications:

- **If your job requires standing or walking:** Avoid **repetitive overhead reaching** and take **breaks to stretch the shoulder**.
- **If your job involves lifting:** Avoid **lifting heavy objects above shoulder height** and use **both hands whenever possible**.
- **If your job is desk-based:** Keep **shoulders relaxed**, ensure **proper arm support**, and take **breaks every 30 minutes** to prevent stiffness.
- **Avoid:** Repetitive overhead activities, prolonged static postures, and forceful lifting or pushing.

Specific Activity Modifications:

- **If you play sports:** Avoid **throwing, swimming strokes, or overhead racket sports** until pain is controlled.
- **If you do weightlifting:** Avoid **bench presses, overhead presses, dips, and pull-ups**; instead, focus on **controlled, pain-free movements**.
- **If you do yoga or Pilates:** Modify poses to **avoid deep shoulder stretching, excessive weight-bearing on the arms, or prolonged static holds**.
- **Avoid:** High-impact activities, repetitive overhead motions, and exercises that cause joint pain.

Recommended Supplements:

- **Collagen Peptides** - 10g daily for cartilage and joint repair.
- **Glucosamine & Chondroitin** - 1500mg/1200mg daily for joint lubrication and cartilage health.
- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids** - 1000mg daily to reduce inflammation.
- **Vitamin D3 + Calcium** - 1000 IU/500mg daily for bone and joint strength.
- **Turmeric (Curcumin)** - 500-1000mg daily for natural pain relief.

Recommended Nutrition and Hydration:

- **Increase Lean Protein** (chicken, fish, tofu, eggs) to support joint and muscle health.
- **Eat Anti-Inflammatory Foods** (salmon, leafy greens, turmeric, berries, nuts) to reduce swelling.
- **Consume Hydrating Foods** (cucumber, watermelon, citrus) to maintain joint lubrication.
- **Limit Processed Foods & Sugars** to prevent inflammation.
- **Hydration:** Drink **8-10 cups of water daily** to support cartilage and joint function.

Home Exercise Prescription (Rehabilitation for Shoulder Arthritis)

Early Phase (0-2 Weeks, Reducing Pain & Stiffness):

- **Pendulum Exercises** - Lean forward, let the arm hang, gently swing in small circles, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Wall Walk (Forward and Lateral)** - Use fingers to "walk" the arm up the wall, **hold 5 seconds, repeat 10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Scapular Squeezes** - Pinch shoulder blades together, hold **5 seconds**, repeat **10 reps, 2x/day**.

Strengthening Phase (2-6 Weeks, Improving Joint Stability & Function):

- **Isometric Shoulder Holds** - Press palm against a wall without moving the shoulder, hold **5 seconds**, repeat **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **External Rotation with Resistance Band** - Keep elbow at **90 degrees**, rotate forearm outward, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Wall Slides** - Stand facing a wall, slide affected arm up and down, **10 reps, 2x/day**.

Advanced Phase (6+ Weeks, Preventing Progression & Maintaining Mobility):

- **Lateral Arm Raises (Light Resistance)** - Raise arms to shoulder height, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Scapular Stability Exercises (Resistance Band Rows)** - Pull resistance band toward chest, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Modified Push-Ups (Wall or Knees)** - Maintain control, **10 reps, 2x/day**.

Helpful Books:

1. *The Arthritis Cure: The Medical Miracle That Can Halt, Reverse, and May Even Cure Osteoarthritis* - Jason Theodosakis, MD.
2. *The Shoulder Pain Solution: Simple Exercises to Prevent and Recover from Injury* - John M. Kirsch, MD.

Click here for more orthopedic patient information.

Contact a Key West orthopedic clinic or reach out to Dr. Jason Pirozzolo.