

Peaking Interests

The quarterly newsletter
of Apex Physical Therapy

Spring 2006 Volume one Issue three

Spring sport strains Overuse injuries of the shoulder and elbow

By Payal Shah, MPT

The sun is shining. Flowers are growing. Birds are chirping. Many people, beginning to enjoy this springtime weather, are becoming more active.

Indeed, spring and summer are the time for sports like golf, tennis and baseball – pastimes that can be both relaxing and energizing. But after a few months of winter hibernation, getting back into the “swing” of things can place great demand on one’s shoulder and elbow joints and lead to various injuries.

The most common upper extremity injuries seen by therapists occur from repetitive strain. These “overuse injuries” are the result of persistent trauma or stress on normal tissue.

Shoulder and elbow injuries associated with baseball, golf and tennis typically involve muscle and tendon inflammation and irritation. Pain, swelling, redness and warmth are some classic inflammation symptoms seen in these joints, which typically last up to one week.

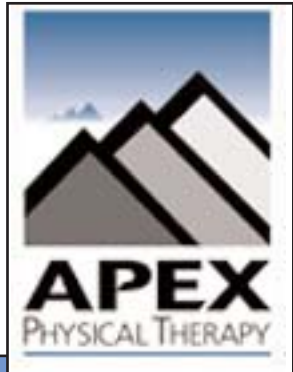
However, with repeated stress and inadequate time for healing, inflamed or irritated tissue can become fibrotic. That is, poorly organized collagen thickens on top or in place of normal tissue. This can lead to tendonitis or degeneration, tearing and even rupture of the muscles or tendons.

Ordinarily, overuse injuries of the shoulder involve the rotator cuff and its surrounding ligaments and bursae – sac-like structures that permit the smooth gliding of bone and tendon. The most common overuse injuries of the elbow seen with spring sports are medial epicondylitis and lateral epicondylitis, also known as “golfer’s elbow” and “tennis elbow.”

In sum, repetitively swinging a golf club, hitting a tennis ball or pitching a baseball increases the likelihood that muscles and tendons in the rotator cuff and elbow will rub against bone. This can lead to inflammation and injury, not only inhibiting return to the sport, but affecting daily living and occupational activities as well.

Rotator cuff injuries, bursitis

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Now serving Five locations

Royersford
341 10th Avenue
Suite 101
Royersford, PA 19468
610-792-8100

Blue Bell
676 DeKalb Pike
Suites 105-106
Blue Bell, PA 19422
610-270-0300

Chalfont
1500 Horizon Drive
Suite 102E
Chalfont, PA 18914
215-712-0300

Pottstown-Coventry
10 Glocker Way
Pottstown, PA 19465
610-323-4300

Lafayette Hill
466 Germantown Pike
Suite 200
Lafayette Hill, PA 19444
610-832-7510

Hours of operation

Mon-Thurs: 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Fri: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sat: 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Check out our Web site

www.apex-pt.com

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(inflammation of the bursae), golfer's elbow and tennis elbow can also be seen in people that don't play a sport. These overuse injuries may develop from activities like gardening, painting or lifting heavy objects. Manual labor jobs that require tight gripping, turning or lifting, such as plumbing or carpentry, can also cause such problems.

Pain, swelling, inflexibility and weakness are common when suffering from any of these injuries. Symptoms usually develop gradually and last for a few days. However, when the injury is more chronic or exacerbated, the rest of the body often compensates, presenting as neck, wrist or hand pain. Many times, the uninjured arm, in an attempt to counterbalance the pain, can itself become painful and stiff.

Initial treatment for these types of injuries often happens at home, with self-medication through NSAIDs – non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, like aspirin and ibuprofen – and “RICE” – rest, ice, compression and elevation – of the affected body part. X-rays and MRIs can help rule out fractures or obvious tears, which would require orthopedic intervention. If symptoms persist, however, consulting a physical therapist or physician can help determine a specified course of treatment.

At Apex, when evaluating a joint irritated by an over-

use injury, the physical therapist will assess not only the joint itself, but the integrity of surrounding joints as well. This is done to rule out or identify secondary injuries from overcompensation or tissue abnormalities.

Next, the therapist will develop a comprehensive program to help improve mobility, strength, stability, posture and functionality of the individual, while minimizing and eventually eliminating pain and swelling. Manual therapy techniques and modalities, such as ultrasound, iontophoresis, phonophoresis, heat and ice, are also frequently used to minimize pain.

At Apex, we strive to maintain a one-on-one working relationship with our patients, whereby we focus on the maintenance of proper postures, good lifting mechanics and beneficial ergonomic setups at work and at home. We also individualize treatment with modifications and tips that can encourage return to the activity or sport that brought the patient into our clinic in the

first place. At times, in conjunction with physical therapy, the patient may also benefit from steroid injections or protective bracing.

If you're about to join a summer baseball team, or if golf is your passion or tennis is your thing, take steps to prevent injuries by referring to our “Do it Right” section on page three. Get out and enjoy spring, but remember to ease into your warm weather activities. Your body will certainly thank you for it.

After a few months of winter hibernation, getting back into the “swing” of things can place great demand on one's shoulder and elbow.

Treat_(ment) for your Tummy



Guacamole with a kick

A fresh, flavorful recipe for any summer cookout or get-together.

Jaime Cassidy, a cousin of one of Apex's owners found this recipe in Lis Lique, El Salvador, while serving in the Peace Corps. It's a simple yet delicious dish, and it will have your guests crowding around the appetizer table until the last chip is gone.

Ingredients

3 ripe avocados
2-3 roma tomatoes

1 small red onion
3 eggs, hard-boiled
2 tbsp fresh lime juice
salt and pepper to taste

Prep/cook time: 30 minutes
Makes: 1 bowl, serves 6-8 people

1. Boil eggs in a small saucepan.
2. While eggs boil, slice avocados in half, peel and chop; peel, slice and chop onion; and chop tomatoes.
3. Combine vegetables in a large bowl and refrigerate.
4. Once eggs cook, transfer them to a large bowl of water to cool.
5. Once cooled, remove shells and chop eggs.
6. Mix vegetables gently with a spoon, mix in eggs and squeeze fresh lime juice over mixture.
7. Add salt and pepper to taste.
8. Serve with tortilla chips.

Meet our Therapists



Eric Braun
MPT

Eric joined Apex Physical Therapy as the Managing Director of the Royersford office in September of 2003.

He received his Bachelors in Psychology in 1992 and his Masters in Physical Therapy in 1995 from Temple University in Philadelphia, PA.

Eric has spent the majority of his nine years in practice working in a hospital-based, outpatient orthopedic setting. He has also been a clinical instructor for many physical therapy students, teaching them a variety of manual therapy techniques.

His particular areas of clinical interest include the treatment of cervical spine pathology, headaches and lumbar dysfunction.

He is an active member of the American Physical Therapy Association and takes multiple continuing education courses to stay in touch with the latest treatment techniques.

Outside of the clinic, Eric enjoys music and sports and spending time with his wife Leah and their three children.

The American Cancer Society's "Relay for Life"

Apex would like to invite all past and current patients to join our team, Beth's Bumblebees, at the American Cancer Society's annual Relay for Life at Pottsgrove High School, 1245 Kauffman Road, Pottstown, on May 20-21. This overnight event is designed to celebrate survivorship and raise money to help the ACS continue to save lives. Donations for our team's participation in this event are also welcome. For more information, contact Royersford receptionist Meghan Johnson at johnme03@yahoo.com.

Welcome to our new staff members

Apex would like to recognize and extend a warm welcome to some of our newest staff members. They include:

- Theresa Chiodo, Billing and Collections department
- Beth Albright, receptionist in Lafayette Hill
- Charlotte Cleary-Flood, receptionist in Blue Bell
- Bianca Lacey, receptionist in Pottstown-Coventry
- Carrie DePerro, MPT, physical therapist in Chalfont

"Babies are such a nice way to start people."

Apex is excited to announce that Director of Marketing Kimberly (Rophel) O'Hare and her husband Mike welcomed daughter Julia Elizabeth into the world on March 8, 2006. Julia weighed 7 lbs., 3 oz. and was 19.5 inches long. Mom, dad and baby are doing well.

The Breast Cancer Three-Day

Lafayette Hill therapist Payal Shah would like to invite all past and current patients to participate with her in the Philadelphia three-day walk for breast cancer on Oct. 6-8. Proceeds from the 60-mile walk, which is held in 12 U.S. cities, will benefit research and community outreach of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, as well an endowment for breast cancer initiatives through the National Philanthropic Trust Breast Cancer Fund. For more information, contact Payal at payal@apex-pt.com.

Referral Rewards

In order to thank our patients for recommending our services to others, we created the Referral Rewards program in December 2005. The program works this way:

- Refer 2 patients: receive a specially designed T-shirt
- Refer 3 patients: receive an Apex sweatshirt
- Refer 4 patients: receive an Apex fleece
- Refer 8 patients: receive a \$150 Kravco-Simon gift card, which can be used at a variety of shopping centers
- Refer 10 patients: receive a \$250 Kravco-Simon gift card

We'd like to recognize and thank Lafayette Hill patients Shari Hoffman, who has referred two new patients to Apex, and Andrea Allanoff, who has referred four patients.

Get certified!

Apex Physical Therapy is hosting a **FREE** CPR and First Aid certification in our Lafayette Hill office from 9 to 11 a.m. on June 10, 2006. Participants will be trained by Cardiac Care and Safety and will have the opportunity to meet some of our physical therapists. Refreshments will also be served.

If you would like to attend, please call Kam at 610-270-0370 by May 15, 2006. Due to space limitations, registration will be limited to the first 20 people who call.

Do it Right: Safe Spring Sporting



General tips:

- Warm up your muscles with stationary cycling, running or walking for 3 to 5 minutes. Start out slow, building to your desired level of activity.
- Stretch daily and strengthen your muscles to prepare for exercise.

Golf tips:

- Use good posture. Avoid hunching over the ball with your neck and shoulders excessively forward.
- Swing smoothly, avoiding extreme wrist movement.
- Don't overswing. That is, don't swing faster or harder than what's right for your skill level.

Tennis tips:

- Rather than swinging with your arms and wrists alone, engage the hips and shoulders. This will place less stress on the muscles and tendons of your elbow and forearm.
- Make sure the racket grip is not too wide for your hand size.
- Don't grip the racket too tightly.
- Avoid overarching your back when hitting a serve or overhead.



Baseball tips:

- Make sure your equipment fits properly and is used correctly.
- Follow the guidelines specified by your baseball league regarding the number of innings pitched (usually between four and ten innings per week).
- While there is no concrete guideline for the number of pitches allowed, a reasonable approach is to pitch 80 to 100 times maximum in a game and 30 to 40 times in practice.
- Wear the appropriate mitt for your position.

Achieving the Apex

What real patients are saying about their successes with our clinics

"I was referred to Apex Physical Therapy for lower back pain due to an annular tear. The facility was clean, pleasant and surprisingly comfortable. I have come a long way since my first visit. The simple tasks that once were painful, such as lifting my 14-month-old son, are now physically easier to handle. I would recommend Apex to anyone with pain."

– Dawn D.

"After months of pain, I am back to normal and very grateful for working with my therapist at Apex. His commitment to finding the multiple causal factors and working with each to free up the pain made a huge difference."

– Ann M.

"When I first came to Apex, I was in pretty bad shape – two herniated discs and two pinched nerves. Just walking was a challenge. The treatment I received at Apex was extraordinary. My therapist's compassion was remarkable, her knowledge vast. She has an obvious passion for caring and real skill in the techniques of healing."

– Margaret F.P.



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