

## *Orthopaedic Connection*

### **Treating Shoulder Pain Without Surgery**

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#### ***Transforming patient information into patient understanding.***

I have always felt the most basic part of my work as an Orthopaedic Surgeon is to decide who can be treated without surgery and who will require surgery to recover.

This is not always easy to figure out. You can see how important it is though, because an incorrect diagnosis may lead to unnecessary surgery.

A prime example of what we are taking about is the shoulder.

#### **Behold the shoulder!**

The most movable, vulnerable and complex of all the joints. It is composed of the humerus (arm bone), scapula (shoulder blade), clavicle (collar bone) with a huge array of muscles, tendons and ligaments holding it all together.

#### **Common Problems**

- Tendon or bursa inflammation
- Shoulder moving partly out of joint (subluxation)
- Frozen shoulder
- Partial tearing of rotator cuff tendons
- Full tear of rotator cuff tendons

#### **Conservative Care**

This should always be uppermost in my mind. And it is! Once you do surgery you can't take it back. Now, I do a lot of shoulder surgery, but most shoulder problems do not require surgery and respond well to "conservative treatment".

#### **Essential Components**

Rest it.  
Don't reach upward.  
Lift only light loads (a few pounds).  
Keep elbow below shoulder level.  
Don't vacuum or rake the yard.

#### **Ice and Heat**

Ice for ten minutes with a cold pack.  
Apply heat for ten minutes after the ice.  
A hot shower can help.

#### **Medication - Anti-inflammatory**

Advil  
Aleve  
Other prescription anti-inflammatory medication  
Not Tylenol

### **Physical Therapy**

You need a prescription from a physician.  
Tailored exercises based on your problem.  
Some component of range of motion  
Strengthening  
A good homework program directed by the therapist

### **Then What?**

The majority of shoulder problems we see in the office will respond to what you have just read. You need to give it 4 - 6 weeks unless you are getting worse. If so, re-evaluation is indicated and some of our patients do require surgery to improve. You can rarely go wrong treating things conservatively in the beginning.

### **Gratiot County Herald Archive and Office Website**

I sincerely hope all of our loyal readers will take advantage of an endless amount of musculoskeletal information. It is easy! Log onto [www.orthopodsurgeon.com](http://www.orthopodsurgeon.com).

It gives access to all Website articles, Your Orthopaedic Connection and every GCH article from most recent to the first. Full text! It covers everything I do in the office and hospital.

Good Health. Good life. All the best to you.

Dr. Haverbush