

Glenohumeral Joint Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis of the glenohumeral joint simply means wear and tear or degenerative change to the shoulder joint. This shoulder joint is the ball and socket joint.

Arthritis of the shoulder is typically misdiagnosed, with incidence of arthritis to the actual ball and socket joint being far less common than its more common counterpart, osteoarthritis of the acromioclavicular joint (ACJ), being the joint that sits next to the shoulder joint.

The risk of developing osteoarthritis in the shoulder accompanied by physical limitations and pain tends to increase with age. An injury, such as that of a dislocated shoulder or fracture to the shoulder can lead to early osteoarthritis of the shoulder. An arthritic shoulder can end up affecting your range-of-motion and abilities to perform everyday tasks. Discovering ways to manage and treat the condition will help to provide you with relief from the pain.

Osteoarthritis, also known as degenerative joint disease, tends to occur whenever the cartilage covering the tops of the bones wears down. This can cause swelling, pain and possibly the development of bone spurs or osteophytes when the ends of the two bones are rubbed against one another.

Glenohumeral Joint Osteoarthritis Anatomy

The shoulder is composed of two joints. The acromioclavicular joint (ACJ) is where the collarbone joins the acromion, which is at the tip of the shoulder blade. The glenohumeral joint (GH) is where the top of the arm bone is connected to the shoulder blade. Osteoarthritis tends to be more commonly located in the ACJ.



How to Treat Glenohumeral Joint Osteoarthritis:

1. Use it!

It's ok to use the shoulder. The big problem with shoulder arthritis is stiffness in the joint. Not using the joint will cause the joint to become stiffer. But don't overdo it, keep use proportionate and stay within your pain limitations.

2. Anti-Inflammatory Medication

Taking an anti-inflammatory medication can help to reduce pain and inflammation. Make sure to discuss the dosages with your provider accordingly. Anti-inflammatories are generally not long term solutions, and medication should only be used for the short term or in cases where there has been a flare-up of symptoms. Using natural anti-inflammatory measures such as diet, ice, heat and therapy can be a much nicer way to reduce inflammation).

3. Physical Therapy

Undergoing regular physical therapy will help to strengthen your muscles and joints and improve range of movement, as well as reduce inflammation. It's incredibly important to work with a therapist.

4. Range-of-Motion Exercises

When you take the time to perform these exercises regularly, you will notice an increase in your flexibility. Improving range of movement to the shoulder will almost certainly result in less pain.

5. Ice

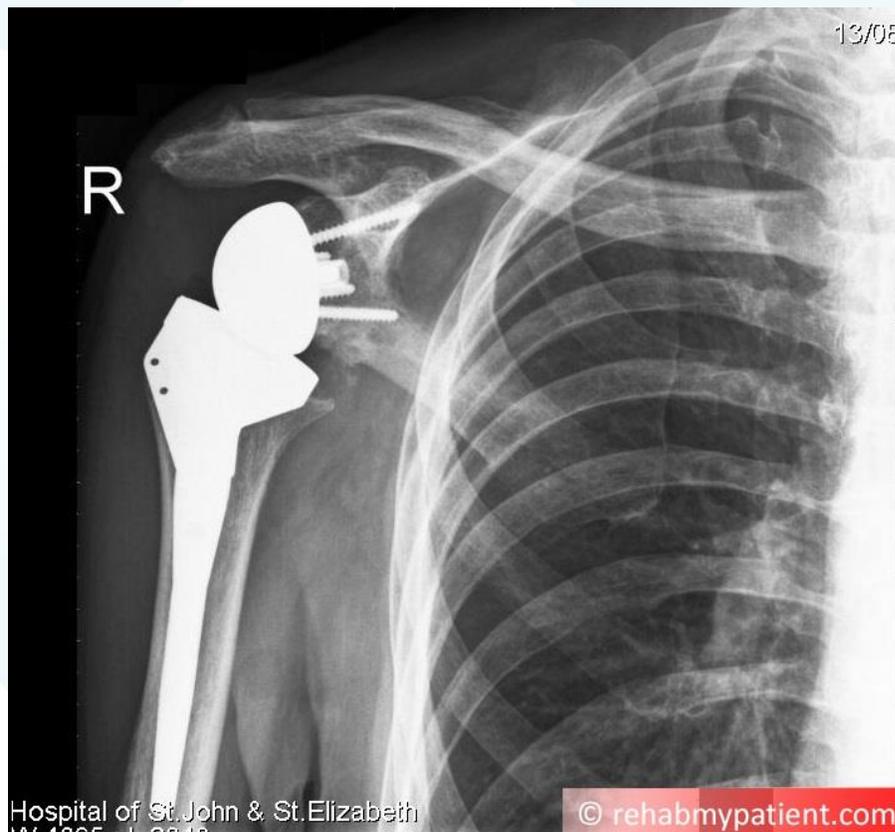
Apply ice to the affected area for five to 10 minutes at a time three to five times per day. The ice will help to alleviate any swelling and pain in the affected area. Often you may need to ice the shoulder for several weeks to get significant results, so be prepared to do this consistently over a period of weeks rather than days.

6. Dietary Supplements

Many individuals claim to find relief by consuming certain supplements. For example, glucosamine, chondroitin, cod-liver oil, Omega 3, and others. For some people, evidence is conflicting on these supplements, so only you can be the judge on whether they are going to work for you. Discuss any supplements with your provider or pharmacist to make sure there aren't going to be any interactions with other medications you might be taking.

7. Surgery

Joint replacement surgery is occasionally performed for shoulder arthritis. However, results are mixed, with some patients reporting negative outcomes from shoulder joint replacement. The commonly used method is reverse ball-and-socket, so the ball is placed onto the socket, and the socket is placed onto the top of the humerus. Discuss your options carefully before proceeding. Shoulder replacement is absolutely a last case scenario.



An X-Ray showing right sided shoulder replacement

Tips:

- Osteoarthritis tends to occur most often in those who are over 50 years of age.
- In younger individuals, osteoarthritis results from a trauma or an injury, such as that of a fractured or dislocated shoulder.
- Osteoarthritis has been known to be hereditary, so make sure and address any concerns with a medical provider.
- Someone suffering from shoulder arthritis will likely have pain when trying to move the shoulder, as well as after movement has occurred.
- Pain while sleeping might be a sign of osteoarthritis setting into the shoulder joint.