

Prevention of Repetitive Motion Injuries

Tips to Help Keep Your Health On Track!

One of the most common injuries is a repetitive motion injury. Individuals whose jobs require repetitive motion or people who exercise frequently are particularly at risk. The two most common types of repetitive injuries are tendinitis and bursitis. They are difficult to distinguish from each other when diagnosing as they can occur at the same time and have similar symptoms. Hopefully, the information provided below can help you understand some of the symptoms and prevention for these types of injuries. ⁽¹⁾

What is tendinitis and bursitis?

Tendinitis and bursitis are two of the most common examples of repetitive motion injuries. Their symptoms are very similar and usually difficult to differentiate: ⁽¹⁾

- **Tendinitis** – Inflammation or irritation to the thick fibrous cord that connects muscle to the bone known as a tendon. Generally, the areas most affected by tendinitis are the tendons around your shoulders, wrists, elbows, knees, and heels.
- **Bursitis** – Inflammation of a small pouch or sac (bursa) whose purpose is to cushion against friction that can occur between the tendon and bone.

What can I do if I am already experiencing symptoms of one these repetitive motion injuries?

- **Pain in a limb, joint, or tendon**
 - Avoid placing stress on these areas for prolonged time periods. Stop and rest that particular tendon area as much as you can until the pain subsides.
 - Apply ice to the painful area for up to 20 minutes, a few times per day.
- **Tenderness and/or swelling**
 - If an area remains tender or swollen, apply a wrap or compressive bandage to the area until the swelling subsides.
 - If it is your knee that is affected, raise your leg above the level of your heart to help reduce the swelling.

What are some preventative measures I can take to lower my risk for developing these injuries?

Prevention of tendinitis and bursitis is pretty similar. Take the following measures to help reduce your risk of developing these types of injuries: ⁽¹⁾

- **Take it easy** – Avoid activities that excessively stress your tendons.
- **Change it up** – If you are experiencing pain when you do any activity or exercise, try switching up your routine. Not stressing the same area over and over again will help alleviate the risk of persistent pain in one particular area.
- **Develop better technique** – You could be doing something incorrectly or with a flawed technique, creating pain and discomfort in your tendon or bursa. If it is happening because of an exercise routine, speak to a professional trainer who can instruct you on proper technique.
- **Make sure you stretch** – Stretching is a good idea, not only for exercising but in the work place as well. Stretching helps increase the range of motion in your joints and can lessen the effects of repetitive injury on tight tissues.
- **Practice proper workplace ergonomics** – Your work area may be contributing to your issues. If possible, have an assessment done on your workspace, including desk, chair, desktop, and keyboard. The proper workplace ergonomics may help keep your joints and tendons better protected.
- **Strengthen your muscles** – Include muscle strengthening into your exercise program, as stronger muscles can better handle the stress and load placed on them daily.

When should I seek medical attention?

Consider making an appointment to see your doctor if you experience any of the following: ⁽¹⁾

- Pain associated with the movement of any extremity.
- Tenderness associated with a joint or tendon that doesn't go away.
- Persistent redness or increased warmth over any joint area.
- Sensitivity to pressure on a particular joint area.
- Pain is severe enough that you are unable to sleep or it wakes you from your sleep.
- Difficulty performing daily activities, such as brushing your teeth, typing on a keyboard, carrying groceries, or taking a shower.

⁽¹⁾ www.cdc.gov; mayoclinic.org; webmd.com

This is informational only, not a replacement for the medical advice of your physician.
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