



# INJURIES OF THE UPPER LIMB

## A general overview

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### DEFINING INJURIES

"Sports injuries" are injuries that happen when playing sports or exercising. Some are from accidents. Others can result from poor training practices or improper gear. Some people get injured when they are not in proper condition.

Injuries are classified as acute, sub-acute or chronic. An acute injury is one which has a direct cause – such as developing a sore elbow whilst bowling during a cricket match. A chronic injury is one which has not recently occurred but which niggles – perhaps even for years.

It is vital to seek treatment for acute injuries in order to prevent them becoming chronic, at which stage it is likely that treatment will be prolonged, and full recovery cannot be guaranteed.

### SHOULDER

Two common shoulder problems are injury to the rotator cuff and injury causing shoulder instability. The rotator cuff is composed of four large muscles that extend from the scapula (shoulder blade) to cover the shoulder joint. These muscles are extremely important for shoulder strength and for holding the shoulder joint in the correct position. Frequent throwing can irritate the rotator cuff or its bursa. A pinching of the bursa and rotator cuff can occur during throwing, especially if the cuff muscles are weak or tired, or if the shoulder has instability.

Another common shoulder ailment that can lead to surgery involves the labrum of the shoulder. (The labrum is the rubbery cartilage "bumper" of the shoulder socket.) The force needed to throw hard and repetitively stresses the shoulder. This can damage the labrum if it tears away from the socket. These tears cause popping, clicking, pain, and the feeling of looseness in the shoulder.



### ELBOW

The most common elbow problems are usually caused by improper throwing mechanics. Throwers often develop muscle and tendon swelling and irritation on the inside of the elbow.



"Tennis elbow" is a common term for a condition caused by overuse of arm, forearm, and hand muscles that results in elbow pain.

### WHEN SHOULD I SEEK TREATMENT?

- If you have any of the following symptoms, it is advisable to seek medical treatment:
  - Arm, shoulder or back pain that occurs with any sort of exertion and is relieved by rest — possibly signalling heart disease or chest discomfort caused by reduced blood flow to your heart muscle (angina)
  - A sudden injury to your arm, particularly if you hear a snap or cracking sound
  - Severe pain and swelling in your arm
  - Trouble moving your arm normally or turning your arm from palm up to palm down and vice versa

### Book an appointment:

**Physiodynamix**, Cramerview Village Centre, corner of Curzon and Main Roads, Bryanston, Johannesburg.

Open from: **7am to 5.30pm**

Telephone: **011 706 7433**