

*Healing injuries, restoring lives*



**GUENTHNER**  
PHYSICAL THERAPY

Spring, 2012



## Message from Cathy

Spring is nature's wake up call, when everything bursts back to life after a cold and dreary winter. Including, all of us. The warmer temperatures and longer days can inspire us to get active. But if you've been idle for the past several months, you'll want ease into things so as not to do any damage to your joints and muscles. For example, if you have a weak shoulder, trying to start the lawnmower could cause an injury.

In this edition of our newsletter, we're focusing on shoulders – common causes of shoulder pain, how they're treated and some stretches you can do to keep your shoulders healthy. If you have shoulder pain that won't go away, we invite you to call our office. We can find the source of the problem and treat it.

*Cathy Guenthner PT, President*

## New Classes!!

**To support our focus on wellness, we're excited to announce we're offering two new classes.**

**Beginning May 14<sup>th</sup> a Total Joint Class will be offered on Mondays at 1:30.** This class is for individuals who have received a total joint, such as hip or knee replacement, gone through therapy but have not reached their desired fitness level. This class will help them increase their mobility so they can resume activities like golfing, exercise walking, exercise classes or gardening.

**Beginning May 15<sup>th</sup> we are pleased to offer a Pilates Mat class on Tuesdays from 6:30-7:30.** In this class, you will work to strengthen the core muscles safely. Judy Fazel will be the instructor.

We are also delighted to announce that Nikki Owens is our new yoga instructor. Nikki teaches a **Gentle Yoga class every Sunday from 4-5** to promote flexibility, strength, balance and, improved energy.

All of the above classes are held at our White Oak Location.



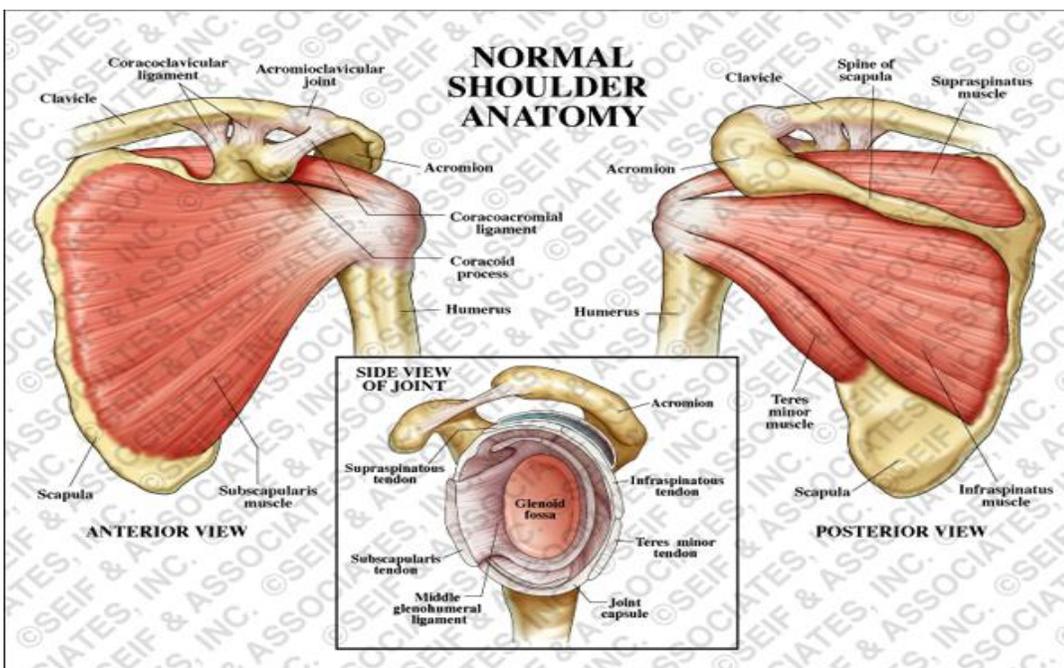
## Focus on Fitness Day

Jump-start your commitment to fitness by attending our **“Focus on Fitness Day.”** **On Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup> from 9-1**, we will be offering **one hour fitness assessments** at our White Oak location at a **50% discount**. The information we can provide you will let you design a fitness program tailored to your unique needs. There will be prizes and giveaways. See the insert for more details.

## How Your Shoulder Works

Whether you're throwing a fastball or eating your dinner, you need a good working shoulder to keep things over the plate. The shoulder is the most movable joint in the body and any change in its range of motion can cause a significant disruption in function.

To understand what can cause shoulder problems it's important to understand how the shoulder works. Two joints, muscles, ligaments, and three bones work together to make your shoulders move. To simplify a complex operating system: the upper arm bone fits into a shallow cup in the shoulder blade. Cartilage and joint fluid help the two glide easily. Part of the shoulder blade is joined to the collarbone and the collarbone helps stabilize the shoulder and the shoulder blade.





Muscles, tendons and ligaments make up the rest of the shoulder. The muscles are attached to different parts of the shoulder and make it possible to move your arms. The deltoid is the strongest muscle and helps you move your arm up and away from the side of your body. The rotator cuff is made up of four muscles that form a “cuff” around the shoulder joint. They are found under the deltoid. They keep the arm bone in place and help control rotation and position of the arm.

Because it is so moveable the shoulder is very prone to injury. Some injuries are minor and can be treated with physical therapy. Some require surgery. It's important to seek medical attention for a correct diagnosis.

## **Most Common Causes of Shoulder Pain**

- **Torn Rotator Cuff**

Someone with a tear in the rotator cuff will feel pain at the top and outer side of the shoulder when the arm is raised or extended. The pain will be intense if the injury is sudden. Falling on an outstretched arm, lifting something heavy or repeated sports motions can result in a tear. The tendons can simply wear down, too, after years of repetitive motion that causes fraying and ultimately a tear. Pain will be more gradual in those with tears due to overuse. Most tears in people over age 40 are caused by normal wear and tear. Athletes are at risk from tears caused by overuse. So are people who lift objects repeatedly and those who do overhead work like painters and carpenters.

- **Impingement Syndrome**

This is the most common shoulder condition seen in aging adults. Impingement Syndrome occurs when the muscles that make up the rotator cuff are injured causing swelling. Because those muscles are surrounded by bone, the swelling causes compression and a lack of blood flow in the smaller blood vessels. This can cause the muscle tissue to fray. One of the major symptoms of Impingement Syndrome is difficulty reaching up behind your back – like when trying to put on a jacket or blouse. Oral anti-inflammatory medications will ease the pain but will not help the underlying condition. Avoid repetitive activities where the elbow reaches above the shoulder like vacuuming and raking leaves until the pain subsides. An MRI can determine if there is a tear in the rotator cuff.



- **Dislocation**

A shoulder becomes dislocated when the top of the arm bone comes out of the socket – or rather – falls off of the small shelf on which it sits. This can happen by falling on your shoulder or by trying to break a fall with your hand. A blow to the shoulder or if your arm is twisted sharply behind your back can also dislocate your shoulder. Immediate medical attention can help you regain full function in your shoulder. Once you've had a dislocation, you may be more apt to have it happen again.

- **Separation**

A separated shoulder causes pain and damage to the ligaments. Injury can tear a ligament that holds the collarbone and the shoulder blade together. This causes the collarbone to create a bump or deformity at the top of the shoulder. People with this injury usually recover fully in time.

- **Arthritis**

People with a history of shoulder injuries are prone to arthritis. Genetics also play a role. Osteoarthritis is the most common type of arthritis in the shoulder. It develops when the cartilage of the joint wears away, exposing the bare bone. Rheumatoid arthritis can also develop in the shoulder. It's a systematic condition that's caused by inflammation in the lining of the joints.

## Treatment of Shoulder Pain

Once the cause of your shoulder pain is diagnosed, your treatment can be determined.

- **Rest** – resting the joint will help to reduce inflammation. Keeping your arm immobile for long periods of time, however, can cause problems and may actually increase the pain and dysfunction of the shoulder. Your physician may prescribe anti-inflammatory and/or pain medication to help you.
- **Ice or Heat?** – **Ice** will help ease swelling of new injuries. It will also keep down swelling of chronic conditions such as overuse in athletes. Use ice on an overuse injury *after* an activity to prevent it from swelling. **Heat** relaxes and loosens tissues and stimulates blood flow to a chronically injured area. Use heat for overuse injuries *before* participating in activities. Do not use heat after an activity or after an acute injury.
- **Physical Therapy** – Physical Therapy is an excellent way to try to help manage a shoulder injury. Once the cause of the problem has been determined, therapists will use specific stretches, exercises, and soft tissue techniques to help restore normal joint integrity, range of motion, strength and will work to eliminate the pain. Many injuries can be very successfully managed by this conservative approach. A doctor's referral



is not necessary to see a physical therapist, but the therapist will coordinate your care with your physician.

- **Surgery** – For some injuries, surgery will be necessary to repair tears and to establish good joint integrity. Your surgery will be followed by physical therapy to help restore normal shoulder function and decrease pain.

## **A Patient's Story...**

For years Ken Baier lived with the pain in his shoulders. He thought that's what happens as you get older, especially after a career doing carpentry work. Baier, 67, is now retired but very active. There was no specific injury that sent him into the Guenthner Physical Therapy White Oak office earlier this year, just the suggestion from his wife and the fact that he hadn't had a good night's sleep in ages.

"I think when the pain interferes with your sleep you can't ignore it," Baier says. Finding a way to lie on his shoulders that didn't cause numbness or pain was extremely difficult. So Baier took his wife's advice, and came to Guenthner on his own, without a doctor referral. He began working with physical therapist Ellen Daly and says he can't believe the difference it's made.

"We started a therapy program and I went over a number of weeks doing exercises and changing exercises. Ellen was just terrific. She zeroed in on this. As the weeks went by, the problems started to clear up." Baier adds, "This indeed was not a normal aging event but a problem that could be corrected." Even after completing his treatment, Baier says his shoulders continue to get better. "I'm extremely pleased."

The official diagnosis was stiff shoulder or shoulder impingement and is likely related to his posture. Now, Baier says he's very conscious of his posture and continues to correct it. Before coming to Guenthner, Baier turned to the internet to look for relief. Any exercises he found and tried ended up hurting him worse. "This is not a do it yourself problem," he says. "I would never have found the way on my own." ##



## Tips for keeping your shoulders healthy.

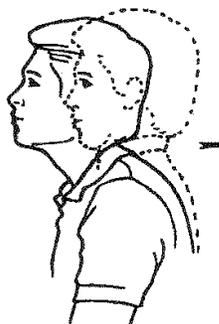
Regular stretching can keep your shoulder muscles healthy and in good working order. Here are some general, gentle stretches that everyone can do to maintain your healthy shoulders. Discontinue any exercises that are causing pain and check with your doctor or therapist.



**Figure 1** Stand up straight. Raise arm over head. Gently pull elbow back with opposite hand until stretch is felt in the shoulder. Hold for 30 seconds, Repeat X 2



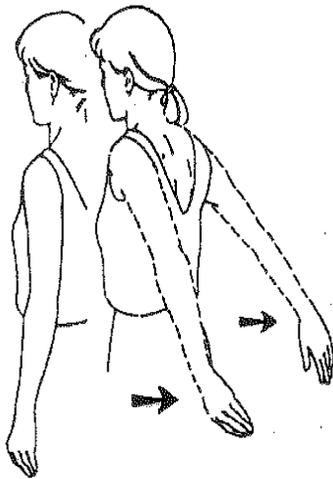
**Figure 2** Bring arm across chest. Hold onto it at the elbow or forearm until stretch is felt in the shoulder. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat X 2.



**Figure 3** Pull head straight back, keeping eyes and jaw level. Hold three seconds. Repeat 6-10 times, 3 times a day.



**Figure 4** Pull shoulder blades down and back away from your ears and toward each other. Hold for 6 seconds. Do 10 reps 3 times a day.



**Figure 5** Bring arms behind you as far as possible without pain. Repeat 10 times 3 times a day.

## **Physical Therapy**

Physical Therapy can be a very effective treatment option for those suffering from shoulder issues. An individual plan will be developed based on your unique needs. Treatment will be oriented on improving strength, flexibility, and balance and coordination. A typical program will last four to six weeks along with a home program so that you can continue to work on improvement after you've completed your sessions. **Remember that a physician referral is not necessary to have an evaluation at Guenther Physical Therapy.** We will coordinate your plan of treatment with your physician of choice and contact him or her if there are any concerns about underlying medical problems contributing to your shoulder issues.

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## The CARE™ Approach

At Guenthner Physical Therapy, we deliver complete patient healing and restored function to pre-injury levels. For 23 years, we have applied the **CARE™** approach to our work.

### **C**omplete **A**ttention

Our patients receive a personal treatment process. We work one on one with you to heal your injury.

### **R**esults

With one on one care, you receive immediate satisfaction and healing.

### **E**xperience

At the end of your treatment, you leave with a **positive reaction, healed injury, and restored life.**

