

Munster Treatment Rooms

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Head & Shoulders

Without the dandruff!

If I had a Euro for every time a client comes to my clinic with a neck or shoulder issue, I'd be in the Bahamas on holidays right now! On a more serious note, I would like to talk about some problems I come across on a regular basis.

Broken Neck - commonly caused by trauma, sudden impact or indirect impact. The causes are varied – and could include car accidents, falls or jumping from heights where the force of landing can be transferred from the feet through the body to the neck resulting in a possible fracture of the neck.

Whiplash - which can occur, for example, after a car is rear-ended by another, thereby causing the head to violently flick backwards and damage the tissues and nerves in the neck and possibly the vertebrae. Nerve entrapment can also be a consequence of whiplash. In a head on collision the head can fall forward suddenly thus wrenching the muscles at the rear of the neck.

Wry Neck (Torticollis) is caused by muscles going into spasm which creates stiffness in the neck. A common cause of this is sleeping in an uncomfortable position though there are of course other reasons. Office workers and hairdressers tend to suffer from this because of their work habits.

Broken Collarbone – this can be caused by a fall on a outstretched arm. This injury is also common among footballers.

Dislocated Shoulder - again this can be caused by a fall or an impact injury and is a common result in sports such as in rugby and martial arts, and requires professional medical advice.

Frozen Shoulder - this is a quite frequent occurrence for people who work in over-head positions, such as plasterers or painters. Their type of work can sometimes involve reaching above their heads for long periods of time which can cause inflammation in and around the shoulder joint and it can be quite painful and uncomfortable.

Rotator Cuff Injuries - this can be a result of occupational activity (e.g. plastering), but can also happen to sports people, especially those involved in rowing, fencing or martial arts, and could even include prolonged use of the Wii as seen in the increases in the numbers of people coming to my clinic who have overdone it on this ever-present new gaming device.

Bursitis - This is inflammation of the Bursa Sack which sits near the top of the shoulder. The sack contains fluid which helps lubricate the shoulder and when this becomes inflamed it can be very painful.

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Shoulder injuries can take a long time to heal. However, with correct treatment and exercise the healing time can be greatly reduced.

- In general, treatment of tight and sore muscles can be carried out with massage and stretching.
- However, if an injury was caused by force of any kind, it is important to pay a visit to your doctor with a view to getting X-rays and or MRI scans to rule out any possibility of fracture.
- Only after fractures have been ruled out or are being treated should you then – with your doctor’s agreement – see another practitioner.

So remember if you’re in trouble with your head or shoulders, don’t suffer in silence. Seek help from a professional and shampoo for anything else!

Best wishes

Rob McGuinness

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