

THE BEST CHOICE FOR SHOULDER IMPINGEMENT

Physical Therapy & Steroid Injections

work equally well for shoulder pain



A NEW STUDY compared the treatments for people with shoulder impingement syndrome

- **Only half** of all new episodes of shoulder impingement end in complete recovery after 6 months, indicating that this is a serious health problem.
- **Physical Therapy** and steroid injections worked about equally well. The relief from an injection may not last as long, leading to more treatments; physical therapy appointments may give doctors more time to educate patients about dealing with shoulder pain
- **More patient-clinician contact** exists in Physical Therapy than in single consultation at which an injection is given—allowing time for advice, reassurance about the condition and self-management approaches.

Physical Therapy Group	Steroid Injection Group
PT 2x's/week for 3 weeks. Therapists evaluated weakness, mobility & pain and performed stretches, contract-relax techniques and reinforcing exercises on the shoulder or upper spine area.	Up to 3 injections of corticosteroids over the course of a year.
They also prescribed at-home exercises for patients.	They also received printed instructions for gentle exercises to do at home.
Significant improvement in symptoms after one month, which continues over the one-year period of study.	Significant improvement in symptoms after one month, which continued over the one-year period of the study.
Patients' scores on pain and disability were reduced by half.	Patients' scores on pain and disability were reduced by half.
37% returned to their primary care doctor for shoulder pain by the end of the year.	60% returned to their primary care doctor for shoulder pain by the end of the year.
	The injection group was also more likely to end up having more injections or additional physical therapy.

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