

# Health & recovery

The Newsletter About Integrative Manual Therapy Issue 3



## Integrative Manual Therapy's Answer to Shoulder Pain

by Sheila Yonemoto, P.T. and Kimberly Burnham, I.M.T.C., PhD. Candidate



**Sheila Yonemoto, PT**  
owner, Yonemoto Physical Therapy

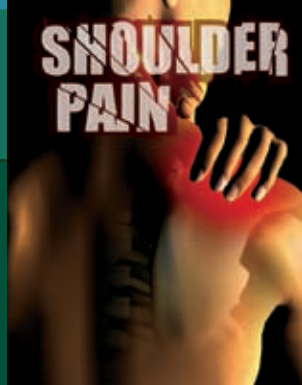
alignment of the joint surfaces makes finding the restriction easy. Sometimes it is the vertebra or a rib putting pressure on the nerves and blood vessels causing the pain. This often gives a sense of numbness and tingling in the shoulder and arm.

This hands-on approach to healing uses the perception and treatment of rhythms in the body. Bone integrity problems can contribute to chronic and sometimes sharp pain. With training, bones contributing to the problem can be palpated and treated using special techniques.

There are also reflex points, similar to acupuncture points found and developed by Sharon W. Giammatteo, PhD., P.T. These points can be contacted to decrease muscle tensions and improve the glide of the joint capsule and ligaments leading to better function and less pain.

Working gently with the biomechanics, rhythms of the nervous system and reflex points can facilitate a decrease in the stresses on the nerves that send pain signals.

### In This Issue



- 1** *Integrative Manual Therapy's™ Answer to Shoulder Pain*
- 2** *Addressing Shoulder Pain with IMT*
- 3** *Tips for rehabilitation*  
Help to rehabilitate your body.
- 4** *Frequently Asked Questions*
- 5** *Featured IMT Therapist*  
Our Featured Therapist can assist you achieve Whole Body Health using IMT....
- Successes**  
Hear what people who have achieved actual recovery from illnesses are saying about us.
- 6** *Contact Us*

**A**thletes, dancers, seniors, as well as other active adults use Integrative Manual Therapy (IMT) to decrease shoulder pain. Each individual has pain for unique and varied reasons, including trauma, muscle tension secondary to heart and lung dysfunctions, bone and connective tissue disorders, nerve entrapment or swelling due to inflammation or infection.

IMT practitioners consult with clients, their doctors and use a variety of hands on assessment techniques to determine the primary cause of shoulder pain. The therapist uses gentle finger pressure skills to find muscle, ligament and joint capsule tensions. There are also palpable rhythms in the body that give an indication of how the bones, blood vessels, nerves and organs are impacting the strains in the shoulder. These can be perceived much like a heart beat or a pulse can be felt, giving an indication of how each system is doing. The therapist will consult with the client about their level and the type of pain, in addition to their goals and consider the activities they want to be doing.

There are several approaches IMT practitioners can take. One is to treat the biomechanics or how the joint surfaces slide on each other. The client will sit or lie on the table while the therapist uses moderate pressure to find the areas restricting the movement and contributing to pain. Focusing on the space and the

## Addressing Shoulder Pain with Integrative Manual Therapy

by Sheila Yonemoto, P.T. and Kimberly Burnham, I.M.T.C., PhD. Candidate

Many people with shoulder problems suffer needlessly because of a delay in treatment. People often ignore early symptoms of shoulder problems. Pain in the front or back of the shoulder, difficulty reaching into a back pocket, aching at night or a sharp twinge when raising the arm, are all indications of a problem. Integrative Manual Therapy addresses these issues on a regular basis.

The shoulder is a complex joint and used all day as we go about our busy lives. Because of this it is often injured or overused. By the time an individual feels pain or experiences any loss of function the problem has progressed.

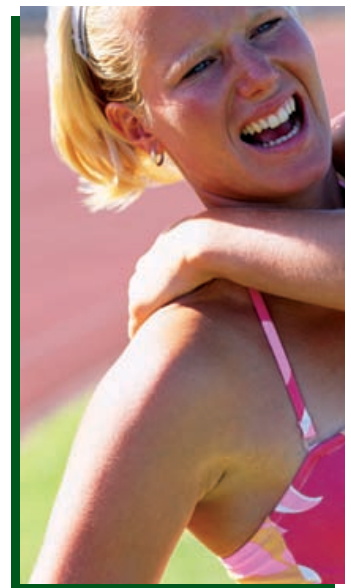
Shoulder conditions present themselves in various forms and are caused by irritations of one sort or another. Some common types of irritation are:

1. Tendonitis (inflammation of the tendon)
2. Bursitis (inflammation of the “bursa” or a fluid-filled sack protecting the joint)
3. Arthritis (inflammation of the joint itself)
4. Joint compression
5. Bone Bruises (Tiny cracks or bone spurs)

These irritations are often caused by a specific injury

or overuse with poor mechanical function. People need full range of motion to do activities like painting a ceiling, playing tennis or lifting overhead. Attempting or forcing activities involving a lot of shoulder movement without proper range of motion can lead to inflammation of the rotator cuff (the main muscles of the shoulder that control the motions of that joint). There can also be a build up of bone spurs or bony tissue in the tendon, ligaments or muscles.

Impingement (“pinching or putting pressure on”) develops when chronic or long term inflammation persists. This causes the tendon and other tissues to thicken, narrowing the space under the edge of the shoulder. The more inflamed the tissue becomes and the narrower the space. Then more pinching occurs, causing significant pain especially when reaching the arm across the body. Left untreated an impingement can progress to a “Frozen Shoulder” where an individual loses some or all shoulder motion.



# Tips for Rehabilitation

Chronic wear and tear or an injury can lead to a breakdown of the tissue. A rotator cuff tear occurs when the tendons of the rotator cuff muscles separate from the bone. In Integrative Manual Therapy this is considered a “Disruption of Membrane” (DOM) and is addressed with a technique which helps increase range of motion, improve stability and decrease pain.

As you can see, there are a lot of different causes of shoulder pain and the treatment depends on the cause of the problem. For this reason it is important to seek medical advice before beginning any treatment.

The first thing an Integrative Manual Therapy (IMT) Practitioner does, after reviewing the referral from the Physician, is his/her own special evaluation. An IMT Practitioner’s skill and training gives the ability to identify what is going to get the patient back to normal in terms of motion and function. During the evaluation, all directions of motion are measured; the muscles are tested individually and as a whole. The therapist will ask a patient questions about his pain and function, look at the patient’s posture and how he moves.

The pain will be addressed by using hands-on techniques to relax the muscles, increase circulation to the damaged tissue, decrease swelling and inflammation and restore proper movement.

Combined with precise joint mobilizations one will likely regain mobility in no time. Then depending on the problem the patient will learn specific exercise designed to re-educate, rebuild and improve the stability of his shoulder.

## *Exercise 1:*

### *Lymphatic Relief for Upper Extremity*

This technique is effective whenever there is swelling or pain of in the shoulder girdle or arm.



1. Place one arm above your head, so the hand is resting on the top of your head. The shoulder and elbow are flexed.
2. Move the opposite shoulder girdle in a rapidly forward (anterior) then backward (posterior) movement. As much as possible only move the shoulder.
3. Repeat these movements at a frequency of one cycle per second. Forward plus backward is one cycle. The movements are quite fast.
4. Perform ten repetitions of this quick forward to backward to forward cyclical exercise.
5. Then change sides and repeat.
6. This exercise can be done 2-3 times a day.
7. If the position or movement causes pain, stop and just do as much as you can without causing pain.

# FAQ

## - Frequently Asked Questions About Integrative Manual Therapy

### Why does my shoulder click or snap?

A tendon that is swollen can “snap” as it moves over a bone. Also there could have been some trauma to the tendon, a bone spur rubbing on the tendon or some calcium deposit in the tendon itself.

### Why is my motion restricted?

Any irritation to the joint area or to the muscles themselves will cause the muscles around that area to “guard” it by tightening and trying to prevent motion. This is a protective mechanism to prevent further irritation or injury. It is not wise to “work” through the pain. The body is trying to tell you about the problem.

### Why does it hurt to lift overhead?

Repetitive overhead work can lead to deep muscle fatigue and altered positioning of the joint. This leads to more irritation of the joint tissue. It is much harder for your muscles to control the motion in your shoulder joint when the arm is over your head because there is more strain on it. As you lose joint control the result is more tissue irritation and pain.

### Why does my shoulder wake me up at night?

A possible cause of this is a tear in the joint tissue or irritation of a tendon in the shoulder. If you put your shoulder in certain positions it can aggravate the irritated tissue. With overhead positioning especially, there could be pinching of the tendons or tugs on the tendon or capsule. Circulation problems affecting the shoulder can also show up as pain in the night.

### Why is it difficult to reach in my back pocket?

Joint irritation, pain or muscle guarding could all be a factor.

### What are the symptoms of rotator cuff problems?

Pain when you reach overhead or your arm just suddenly feeling weak and dropping when you lift something, are the typical symptoms.

## CAN IMT HELP YOU: Take this simple test...

Simply place a check mark in the appropriate box. Once you are done, calculate the number of YESes and look at the results.

YES	NO	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you have pain when you raise your arm above your head?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it hurt to reach?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you have pain while sleeping at night?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it hurt to lie on your shoulder?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you have pain over the outside of your shoulder in the area of the upper arm?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you unable to raise your arm?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you unable to carry objects or lift something?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you have pain in the front of your shoulder?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your shoulder feel loose and unstable?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your shoulder feel stiff and tight?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you unable to reach into your back pocket?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you unable to touch the back of your neck?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you unable to reach the back of your bra?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you have pain that radiates down your arm?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your arm feel achy and weak?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your shoulder hurt after working out?

### Results:

#### Less than 3 Yes

You're doing fine. Exercising may help keep your shoulder in check.

#### Between 3 and 6 Yes.

Integrative Manual Therapy is an option for you.

#### Between 6 and 10 Yes.

We would advise you to see a doctor to get a better diagnosis. Integrative Manual Therapy is definitely an option.



# Featured Therapist

## Lisa Chinn, PTA



Lisa Chinn went to Cal State LA and then went on to Loma Linda University where she got a degree in their Physical Therapy Assistant Program. She has worked in a variety of acute hospital settings, rehabilitation facilities and has been working at Yonemoto Physical Therapy for over 10 years. She has been developing her skills in Integrative Manual Therapy for the past 8 years and has worked as a class coordinator and board member for the IMT Association. She has her certificate

in exercise training and fitness program development.

Lisa is very outgoing and enjoys working with a variety of people. She speaks Cantonese, sings and plays the saxophone.

Lisa and her husband, Curtis, recently had a baby, Emily, who is now 4 months old and very cute. Lisa enjoys gardening, keeps up with sports, spends time with her family and friends, and has been enjoying being a mom.

# SUCCESSES **What parents are saying...**



Before coming to Yonemoto Physical Therapy, I had great difficulty getting dressed, driving and just doing simple chores around the house. Now, I can do everything I need to with very little or no pain! You guys are great! Thank you —S.C.

I had been having pain in my left shoulder for a long time and tried medication which didn't help a lot. It gave me relief for a few months and then the pain came back. I was told that I probably should



get a surgical consult. A friend told me about Yonemoto Physical therapy and I was able to get an appointment right away. The treatments did work and now I am pain free. I clean houses and offices so I use my shoulder and arms a lot and they haven't bothered me. —D.R.

I was having terrible shoulder pain and I didn't know where it was coming from. It was keeping me awake at night which was making me miserable. After five months my arm began getting weak and I was also getting neck pain and headaches. I got a cortisone shot but it wasn't until I began treatment with Yonemoto Physical Therapy

that my shoulder really started recovering. After about a month I was doing fine, and it was great to be able to sleep again! —P.V.

My condition has improved greatly since coming here. The soreness has

almost left. I don't need my cane as much as prior to coming here. Thank you!! —LA

I was experiencing terrible pain in both my shoulders when playing golf. After coming to Yonemoto Physical Therapy for 5 weeks I now am able to play 18 holes without any pain. I was skeptical at first and thought I would need surgery so I am definitely pleased with what the staff at Yonemoto PT was able to do for me! —C.J.

Thanks!! I have heard many people speak of physical therapy with fear in their voices, but I have had a great experience here. —BV



# Tired of having SHOULDER PAIN?



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Yonemoto Physical Therapy has successfully treated patients since 1982. We provide several therapy programs ranging from Integrative Manual Therapy, FirstLine Wellness programs, Worksteps which provides services for employers, chi-gong, as well as therapy for common orthopedic problems such as backaches, knee injuries and twisted ankles and pool therapy programs.

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Shoulder Pain**

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