

# Shoulder Instability - A Quick Guide



The shoulder is one of the most mobile joints in the body, which allows us to perform a wide range of activities. However, this mobility also makes the shoulder susceptible to instability. Shoulder instability is a condition in which the shoulder joint is too loose, allowing the humerus (upper arm bone) to dislocate from the glenoid fossa (socket) partially or completely.

There are two main types of shoulder instability: anterior and posterior. Anterior shoulder instability is the commonest and occurs when the humerus dislocates out of the socket forward. Posterior shoulder instability is less common and occurs when the humerus dislocates backward out of the socket. Severe cases of the condition may demand surgical intervention involving the use of [Orthopaedic Trauma Implants](#).

## What Are the Causes of Shoulder Instability?

A number of factors can cause Shoulder instability which may include:

- A traumatic event like a fall or a sports injury
- A congenital defect in the shoulder joint
- Repeated overhead activities, such as swimming or throwing
- Age-related changes in the shoulder joint

## What Are the Symptoms of Shoulder Instability?

Symptoms of shoulder instability depends on the condition's severity. Mild cases may only cause occasional pain and discomfort, while more severe cases may cause frequent dislocations or subluxations (partial dislocations). Other symptoms of shoulder instability can include:

- A popping or clicking sensation in the shoulder

- Weakness or instability in the shoulder
- Pain with overhead activities
- Difficulty sleeping on the affected shoulder

## How is Shoulder Instability Diagnosed?

If you are experiencing any of the symptoms of shoulder instability, it is important to see a doctor for diagnosis and treatment. The doctor will examine your shoulder and perform a number of tests to assess the stability of the joint. These tests may include:

- Range of motion testing
- Strength testing
- Special tests, such as the sulcus sign and the apprehension test
- Imaging tests like MRI or X-ray

## What is the Treatment for Shoulder Instability?

The treatment for shoulder instability will vary according to the severity and symptoms. Mild cases may be treated with physical therapy, which can help to strengthen the muscles around the shoulder and improve stability. More severe cases may require surgery to repair the torn ligaments or labrum.

Physical therapy is an important part of the treatment for shoulder instability. The therapist will teach you exercises to strengthen the muscles around the shoulder and improve stability. The exercises will typically focus on the rotator cuff muscles, which help to stabilize the shoulder joint.

Surgery is usually only recommended for people with severe shoulder instability who have not responded to physical therapy. The type of surgery performed will depend on the specific cause of the instability. In some cases, the surgeon may repair the torn ligaments or labrum. In other cases, the surgeon may tighten the capsule around the shoulder joint.

Most people with shoulder instability can return to their normal activities after proper treatment. However, it is important to follow your doctor's instructions and to continue with physical therapy after surgery.

Here are some tips to help prevent shoulder instability:

- Warm up before engaging in activities that put stress on your shoulders.
- Use proper technique while playing sports or lifting weights.
- Do not engage in activities that results in shoulder pain.
- Strengthen muscles around the shoulder by exercising regularly.

If you are experiencing any of the symptoms of shoulder instability, it is important to see a doctor for diagnosis and treatment. With proper care, most people can return to their normal activities without any problems.

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