

# Bursitis/ Tendinitis

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Bursitis and tendinitis are painful conditions involving tissues around the joints. Bursitis is inflammation of a bursa (or bursae, if more than one is affected). Bursae are small, fluid-filled sacs that provide padding and lubrication between muscles or between muscles and bones. Tendinitis is inflammation of a tendon, which is a tough, rope-like tissue that attaches muscle to bone. You can feel tendons along the back of your ankle or your knee.

Inflammation may affect either a bursa or a tendon by itself, or an inflamed tendon may affect the neighboring bursa. Bursitis and tendinitis can occur anywhere in the body, but most commonly they involve the shoulder, elbow, wrist, knee, hip, or ankle. Usually, only one or two areas are affected. Inflamed bursae or tendons often, but not always, result from strain or overuse during recreation or work activities. You have probably heard of "housemaid's knees" or "tennis elbow" which are examples of bursitis and tendinitis.

Treatment is aimed at relieving pain and inflammation, restoring free movement of the joint, and preventing future problems. To achieve these aims, your treatment plan has several important parts.

## Relieving Pain and Inflammation

Medication may be used to relieve pain and inflammation while your body's natural healing process goes on. One type of medication that relieves inflammation and pain, an anti-inflammatory/analgesic drug, is taken by mouth. Another type of medication, a corticosteroid, is given by injection directly into the inflamed area; corticosteroids lessen inflammation, resulting in reduced pain.

Your doctor has chosen the medication or medications best suited to your needs. To get the most benefit from your medication, make sure you follow your doctor's instructions carefully. Several other points about medication are important:

- Your doctor and pharmacist need to know about any other medications you take, both those prescribed by other doctors and those you use without a prescription. This is important because some drugs can interact with each other to produce undesirable effects.
- Check with your doctor if you notice any unusual reactions after starting on a medication.
- Taking more medication than prescribed can be dangerous.
- Never try any treatment unless you and your doctor have discussed it.

## Exercises

Move the joint as far as it can go in each direction (range of motion) \_\_\_\_\_ times. Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times a day.

- |                                   |                                |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> shoulder | <input type="checkbox"/> hip   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> elbow    | <input type="checkbox"/> knee  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> wrist    | <input type="checkbox"/> ankle |

See other side for examples of exercises that are frequently recommended for some joints.

**IMPORTANT:** Be sure to follow carefully the exercise instructions your doctor has given you.

### Special Instructions:

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# Bursitis/ Tendinitis

If pain is severe in the *early stages* of bursitis or tendinitis, your doctor may advise complete rest of the affected area until the pain eases up. Resting the part gives your body a chance to start healing on its own. A sling may be useful in promoting rest if your elbow or shoulder is affected.

Applying warmth or cold to the affected area may help reduce pain and muscle spasm. Your doctor may advise which is best for you. For warmth, you can use a heating pad, moist hot compresses, or take a hot shower. Ice packs or a plastic sack of frozen peas wrapped in a wet towel can be used to provide "wrap-around" cold.

## Restoring Free Movement

Treatment includes finding the right balance between rest and exercise of the affected area. Rest tends to be almost automatic; you protect the body part and avoid pain by not moving it. On the other hand, if the muscles around the affected area are not exercised, they will weaken. Without proper exercise, you may even lose free movement of the affected joint; an example of this problem is "frozen shoulder."

Some exercises are illustrated at the right, but only your doctor can determine which of these exercises, or what others, are best for you. As with other parts of your treatment plan, you should follow your doctor's specific instructions carefully.

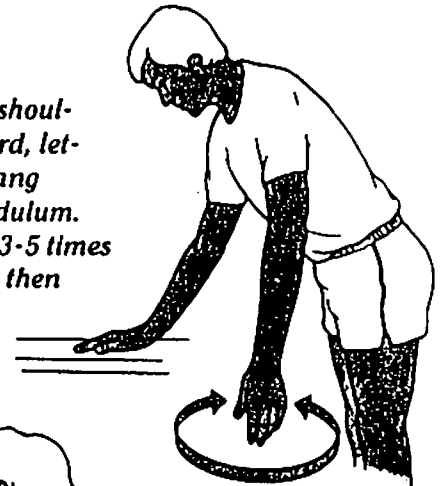
## Preventing Future Problems

Exercises prevent future problems by strengthening muscles around the joint and by keeping the joint limber.

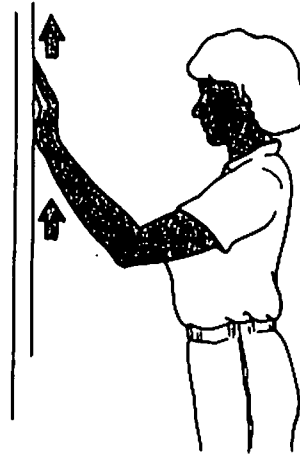
Because bursitis and tendinitis sometimes result from injury or overuse, your doctor will want to know about your physical activities, both on and off the job. Avoidance of an activity that contributed to the problem will help prevent further injury; if your job depends upon that activity, you and your doctor may be able to work out a different way of doing the same task.

## Sample Exercises

1. To limber up shoulders: lean forward, letting your arm hang down like a pendulum. Circle your arm 3-5 times in one direction, then the other.



2. To flex your shoulder: "climb" the wall by walking your fingers upward.



3. To increase the range of motion in your shoulders: hold a broomstick with your hands about 18 inches apart. Raise your arms slowly, letting your good arm help move the injured arm.



4. To stretch your Achilles tendon (back of your ankle): hold onto the sides of a table. Bend the knee of the leg you are not stretching and put the leg to be stretched behind you. Keep both feet flat and lean forward. With the back knee straight, you should feel a good stretch in the calf of the straight leg.

