

Quick Reference for Common Shoulder Complaints

COMPLAINT	TISSUES INVOLVED	PRECIPITATING FACTORS
Aching in axilla between ribs	Serratus Anterior	Trigger points
Arched back when reaching or moving overhead	Latissimus Dorsi	Shortened, trigger points
Brachial plexus dysfunction (Thoracic Outlet Syndrome, paralysis, shoulder dislocations, clavicular fractures)	Pectoralis Minor, Subclavius	Pain, tingling, numbness down arm, cold extremity
Bursitis	Anterior Deltoid	Weakened posterior deltoid
Crackling or Popping in shoulder when abducting or extending	Subscapularis	Trigger Points
Extensor Tendonitis (Pain when placing arm through sleeve or putting on seatbelt for example)	Infraspinatus, Teres Minor tendons	Pulling wheeled suitcases, excessive poling during cross country skiing are examples
Knot on scapular medial border	Fascia of Middle Trapezius	Fascial adhesions
Large Breasts	Pectoralis Major	Trigger Points
Pain with deep breathing	Latissimus Dorsi	Inter-digitates with external oblique
Pain in anterior shoulder/upper arm when trying to move arm/hand behind back or across body	Coracobrachialis, Triceps	Trigger points, fascial adhesions Examples: golf swing, pulling something down from above, weight bearing activities of arms
Pain and/or weakness when lifting arm away from body when arm is behind back	Rhomboids	Weakened
Pain when pushing to support body	Pectoralis Major, Serratus Anterior, Latissimus Dorsi	Pushing self up out of a chair, walking with crutches are examples
Pain/tenderness at the lateral curve (near glenoid fossa) on posterior scapula	Triceps	Trigger Points, fascial adhesions
Snapping in front of shoulder with movements, especially	Biceps Tendon	Slipping across biceps tendon groove

extension		
Stiff Neck	Levator Scapula	Trigger points
Winging of Scapula—Medial	Serratus Anterior	Fascial adhesions, trigger points
Winging of Scapula—Lateral	Rhomboid Major & Minor	Fascial adhesions, trigger points