

(Wellness Tips Ezine) Is your neck, arm and upper-back pain coming from poor shoulder-blade position?

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### Is your neck, arm or upper-back pain coming from poor shoulder-blade position?

*The resting position of the shoulder-blade is important to the health and comfort of the muscles of the neck shoulder and upper back, and also to the nerves that run from the neck into the arm.*

Neck, shoulder, and upper back pain **are very common problems** that many people suffer from, and although they can have many different causes, **improving overall posture as well as the resting position of the shoulder-blade are frequently overlooked as potential solutions.**

**The shoulder blade or scapula is the triangular bone that sits on the back of our upper ribcage, which houses the arm socket.** But unlike the hip socket which really is a cup that the leg bone (femur) sits in, the **arm socket is shaped more like a tiny plate.**

Furthermore, the ball that forms the top of the arm bone (humerus) is a lot larger than the plate of the socket, so it is a bit analgous to a golf ball on a tee rather than in a cereal bowl. Except of course, **when we talk about the shoulder joint, the plate is sitting on its rim.**

It becomes immediately obvious that the joint itself is inherently unstable, and **it must largely rely on the ligaments, tendons and muscles that surround it to "strap" the arm to the body.**

However, the angle of the plate can make a big difference to the strain the muscles are placed under. If the plate of the socket is angled up a slight bit, the humeral head (arm ball) can rest on the rim, whereas **if the plate of the socket is angled down, the humeral head is essentially falling out of the socket,** and the muscles have to work much harder to hold the arm in place.

Also, if the glenohumeral joint is pointing down as can be seen in the upper left diagram, usually the shoulder-blade will not rotate far enough when the arm is moved up overhead, and the arm bone (humerus) will bang up against the bony protuberance of the shoulder-blade called the acromion, **creating an impingement problem,** which may in time damage the supraspinatus (rotator cuff) tendon.

Furthermore, if the glenohumeral joint (arm socket) is angled down, **the nerves that leave the cervical spine to go into the arm have a very long way to go** - much further than if the glenohumeral joint were angled up. **Nerves don't like being stretched, and stretched nerves tend to be painful.**

I find that when I see someone that has a shoulder socket pointing down with radiating arm pain or sore neck/shoulder muscles, I tell them to relax, and I pick up their armpit (actually the upper arm near the armpit) and hold it up for a few minutes. Frequently their pain goes away, and then I know that providing an exercise program that improves the position of the shoulder socket will probably work.

So, **how do you tell if your arm socket is pointing up or down?** Tough to do on your own, but if you have very long, sloped shoulders you can be



*Solve Your Chronic Pain!*

**Free educational seminar for those in the Vancouver BC area**

**Are you in chronic pain and frustrated that you can't find a solution?**

- Are you avoiding activities you want to do because it hurts?
  - Is pain keeping you up at night?
  - Are you tired of taking pills?
- Make an educated decision moving forward to live a pain-free life!

Often chronic pain is caused by:

- Adhered organs, nerves and blood supply
- Poor posture
- Walking incorrectly
- Bad movement habits
- Tight muscles

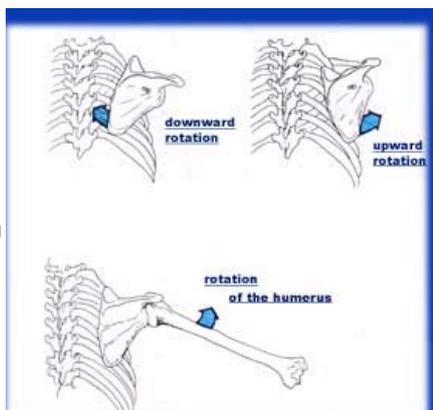
**Attend this informative seminar** and you will learn:

- How injuries, falls and surgeries can stop organs, nerves and blood vessels from moving as they should.
- The importance and impact of posture
- Crucial role and function of your core
- Why poor movement habits can lead to pain

**When:**  
Wednesday September 16, 2015,  
6h30-8pm

**Where:**  
Vancouver Racquets Club  
4867 Ontario St  
Vancouver, BC

**How to register:**  
Phone: 604-256-3463



do on your own, but if you have very long, sloped shoulders you can be suspicious. If the outer end of your collarbone is lower than its attachment at the sternum, your glenohumeral joint is pointing down.

Email: [info@iweall.ca](mailto:info@iweall.ca)

Most of you will need to ask a friend or partner to look at your shoulder blades from the back. **If the bottom corner of the shoulder blade is closer to the spine than the top part of that inner border as shown in the left upper diagram, then your shoulder joint is pointing down.**

Eventbrite link:

[www.solveyourchronicpain.eventbrite.ca](http://www.solveyourchronicpain.eventbrite.ca)

If you are in pain and you discover that your socket is pointing down, you need to **find a good physiotherapist**, CHEK Practitioner or an extremely knowledgeable personal trainer that can teach you how to build muscle endurance in serratus anterior, low traps, and upper traps without overusing levator scapula, rhomboids, and lats, and even more importantly, **teach you how to move your arm and shoulder-blade so that you recruit the right muscles in the right order to keep your shoulder, upper back and neck happy.**

I look forward to your comments on my [blog](#). If you want to share this article, scroll to the very bottom and click the "share" icon to post on Facebook, Twitter etc. If you want to subscribe or search for other posts by title or by topic, go to [www.wellnesstips.ca](http://www.wellnesstips.ca).

And if you live in the Vancouver area and are living with pain, come to our free "[Solve your Chronic Pain](#)" seminar, September 16th. I would love to meet you! (See the ad to the right.)

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