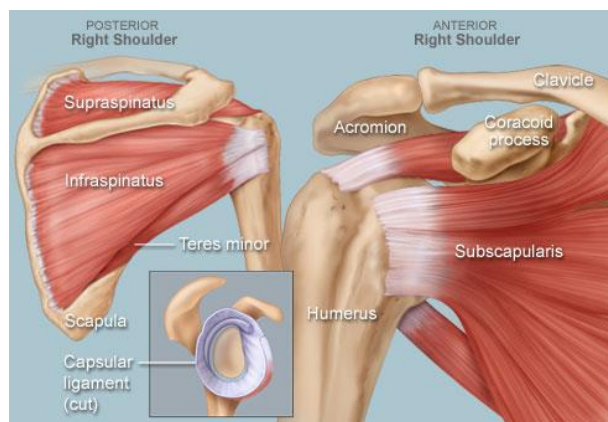




Multi-Directional Instability of the Shoulder

What is it?

Multi-directional instability (sometimes abbreviated as MDI) occurs when the shoulder joint is loose within the socket. There is not a traumatic event that causes the instability, but rather the shoulder has a tendency to shift excessively, causing pain in the joint. Often, people who have symptoms of multi-directional instability complain of clunking, shifting, or pain of the shoulder with overhead movements such as swimming or throwing.



Treatment:

- Ice, rest from overhead activities
- Anti-inflammatory medicine (ie: Ibuprofen, Aleve, etc)
- **Rotator cuff strengthening** with home exercises or physiotherapy
- Physical Therapy – when pain improves (after 3 wks)
- Orthobiologic injections – Prolotherapy and Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP) - experimental
- Surgery – rarely for dominant arm of throwers or severe instability

When can I return to sports?

Return to sports is variable, depending on many factors: severity of MDI, the type of sport, position in sports, hand dominance, etc. MDI causes pain with activity but is not usually dangerous so returning to sports can happen as quickly as tolerated. Generally, the following criteria should be met before return to play:

- Pain-free with normal activities of daily living
- Pain-free motion of the shoulder
- Improved strength (~ 80% of original)

What about long-term complications?

There is a high risk of recurrence of pain with return to activities as well as a small increased risk of shoulder dislocation, but rotator cuff strengthening usually allows for return to full activities within 6-12 weeks.