

shoulder Health in the Aging Athlete

AKA Keep Me Playing Golf and
Pickleball!

Dr. John A. Hinson

Palm Beach Orthopaedic Institute

The aging athlete

- Golf has long been popular in part due to the fact that as people age, they can continue to participate
- Pickleball has seen wildly increasing popularity in recent years; also in part due to the fact that people can continue to play even as they see decreased mobility with age
- One of my roles as a surgeon is to keep the aging athlete on the court or the golf course and help them continue to enjoy their sport



The aging athlete

There are some common injury themes between the two sports

There are overlapping patterns of chronic injuries between the two sports

There are injuries unique to the pickleball court that deserve special attention

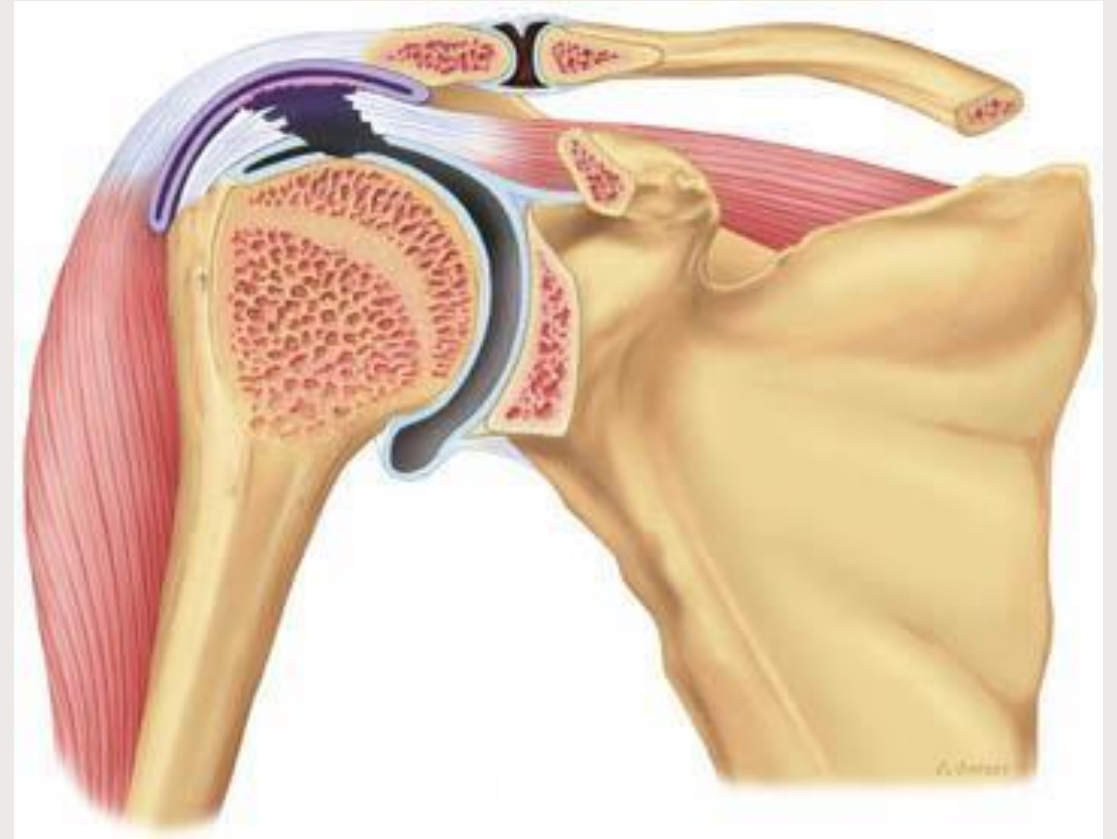
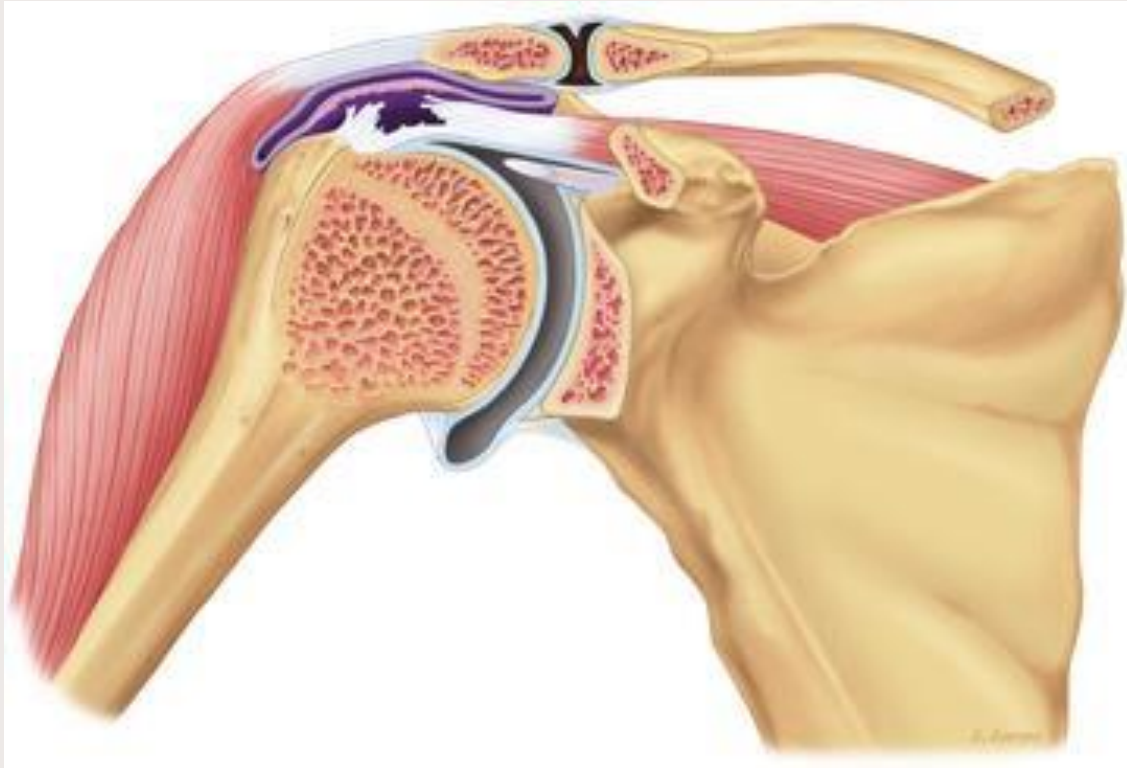
Safety on the pickleball court is improved with a few simple steps

Chronic Shoulder Injuries

- Rotator cuff tears are the most common injury
 - Patient will relate an insidious onset of symptoms without a specific event; may be able to relate it to a day of playing but not a specific swing
 - Patient will complain of pain while playing that is often times sharp with swinging a club or paddle. Sometimes the pain will occur after playing.
 - Patients often experience night pain.
 - May limit their ability to play



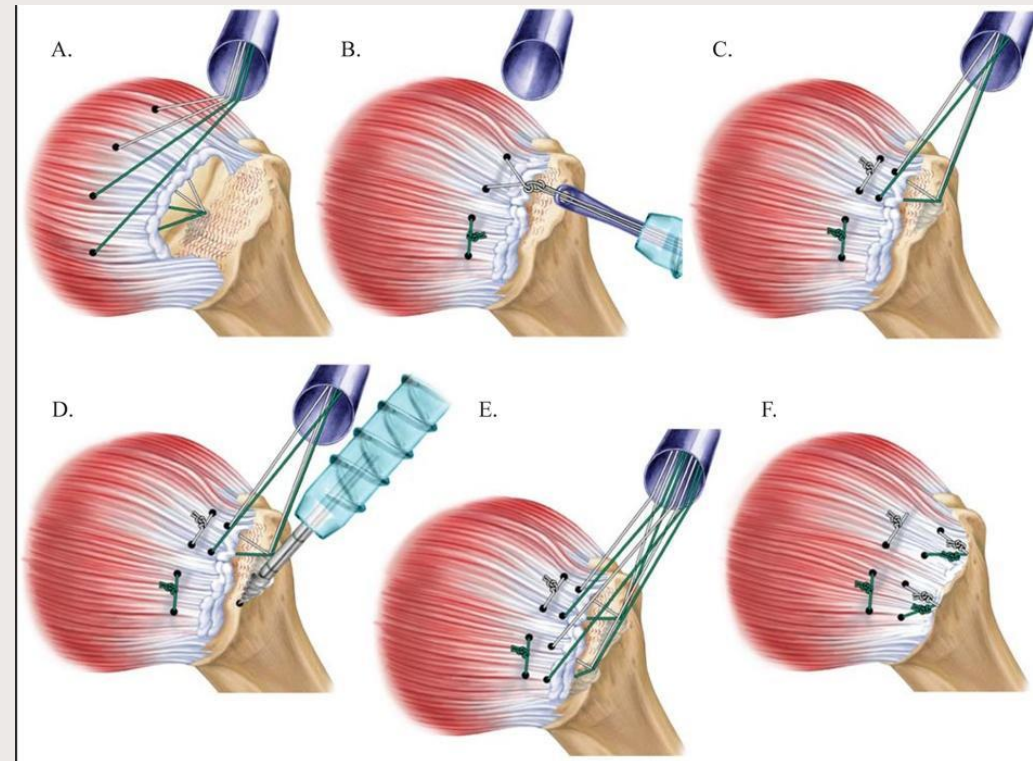
Rotator Cuff Tears



Rotator Cuff Tear Treatment

- Treatment for most patients begins with conservative measures including anti-inflammatory medication, ice/heat, physical therapy, and corticosteroid injection (cortisone shot)
- Activity modification including decreasing or stopping playing for a period
- If symptoms persist or there is concern for significant injury a MRI may be ordered
- Surgery is reserved for those who do not improve with conservative treatment or those with more severe injury

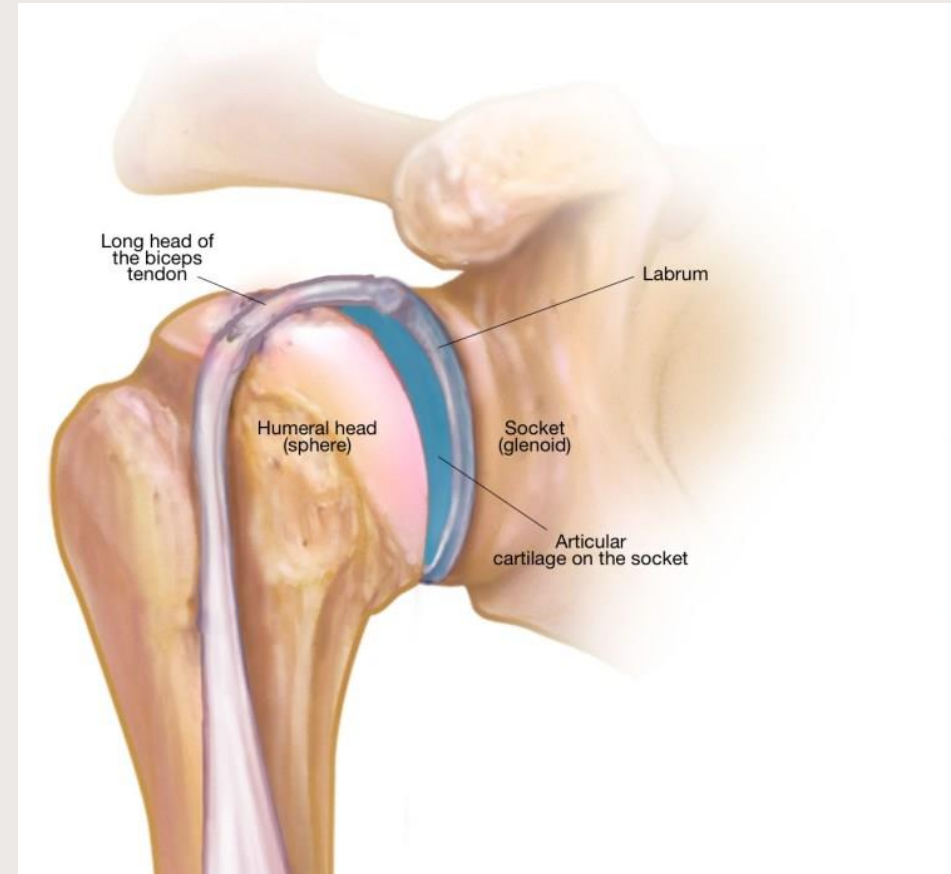
Rotator Cuff Repair



- Tendon is reattached to the bone using anchors and sutures
- Surgery is typically arthroscopic
- Surgery is outpatient
- Lengthy recovery period

Chronic shoulder injuries

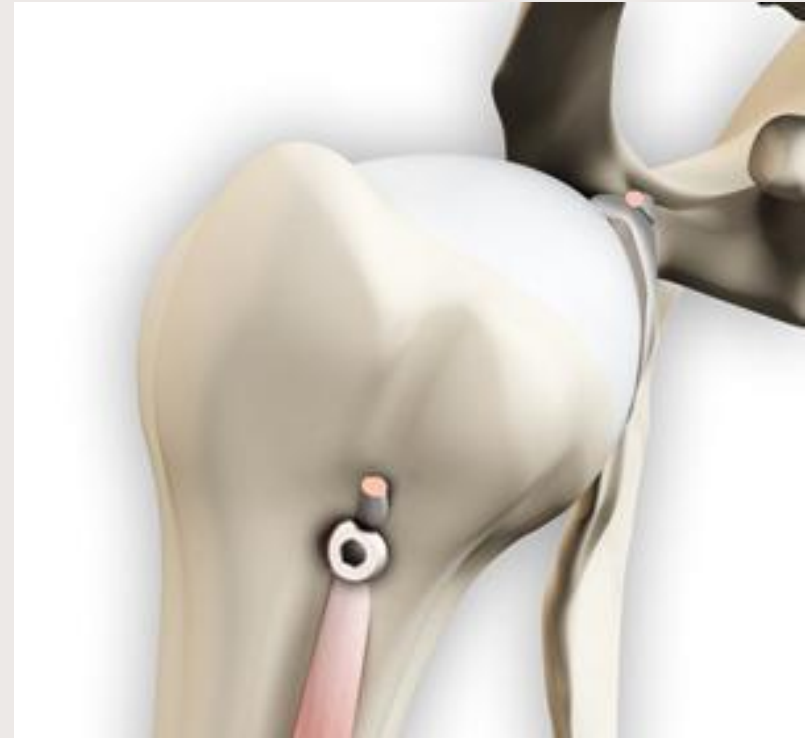
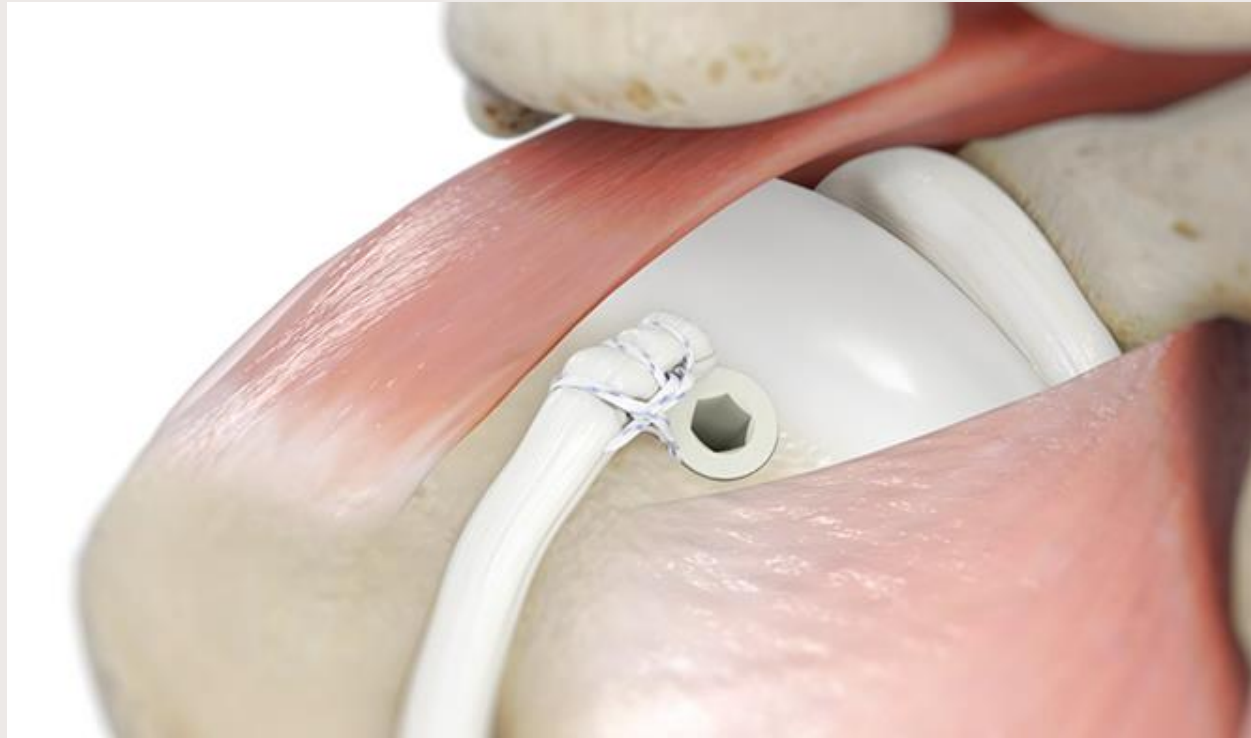
- Other chronic soft tissue injuries include injuries to the proximal biceps tendon and labrum
- Common degenerative shoulder conditions
- Involve injury to the biceps tendon as it runs into the shoulder or at its attachment to the superior aspect of the labrum
- The symptoms in these conditions overlap very closely



biceps and labrum injuries

- Patients will often complain of pain in the front of the shoulder
- Will typically complain of pain with movement
- In aging patients these injuries and symptoms will usually be seen in patients who have issues with their rotator cuff (not typically seen in isolation as they are sometimes seen in younger patients)
- Treatment for these patients begins with conservative measures including anti-inflammatory medication, ice/heat, physical therapy, and corticosteroid injection (cortisone shot)
- MRI is typically the imaging of choice if symptoms persist with conservative treatment
- Surgery is reserved for patients who do not improve with conservative treatment

Biceps Tenodesis



Shoulder arthritis

- Do not expect pickleball or golf to cause arthritis
- May precipitate symptoms or exacerbate existing symptoms
- Arthritic shoulder will often have decreased range of motion – the movement during pickleball or golf will be at the limit of movement for the arthritic shoulder and this can lead to symptoms
- Patients will complain of pain while playing and pain with even basic activities; may have clicking in the shoulder

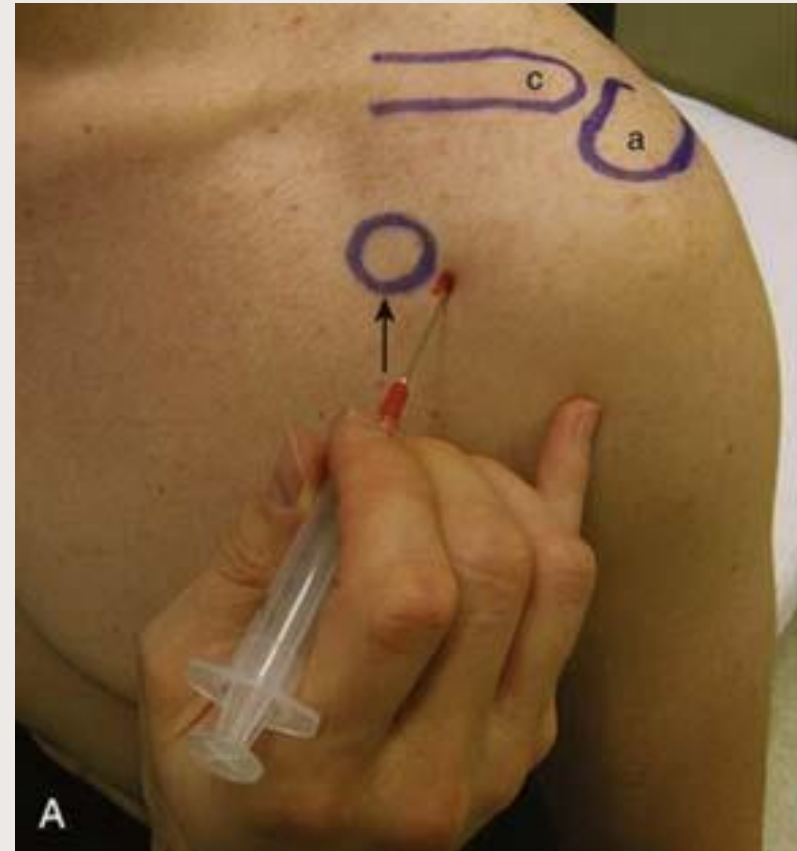


Shoulder Arthritis

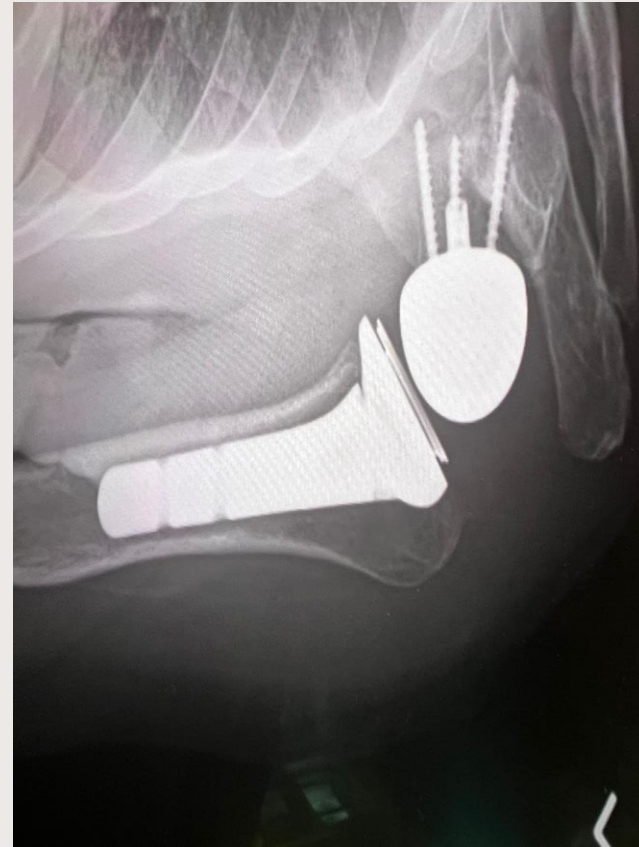
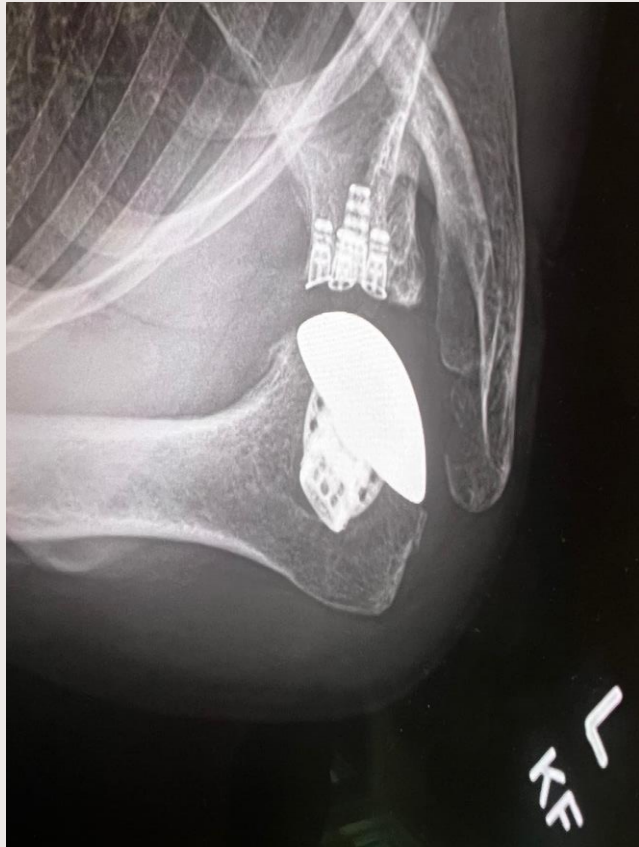


Shoulder Arthritis

- Treatment usually begins with rest, ice, anti-inflammatories, and potentially injection
- Modifying intensity and amount of play may significantly improve symptoms
- For patients who don't improve shoulder replacement can be very effective for pain relief, and I expect them to return to playing pickleball and golf



Shoulder Arthritis



Pickleball injuries

- Due to the nature of the sport there is more risk for acute injury
- Acute injuries
 - *Falls on the court*
 - *“Swing for the fences” event*



Acute Injuries - Falls

- Falls onto an outstretched hand are the most common mechanism and can result in shoulder, elbow, wrist, or hand injuries
- Falls directly onto the shoulder or elbow can also result in injury
- Shoulder injuries can include fractures, dislocations, rotator cuff tendon tears, labrum tears, and biceps tears
- Treatment will vary based on the exact nature and severity of the injury but can include emergency surgery for severe injuries

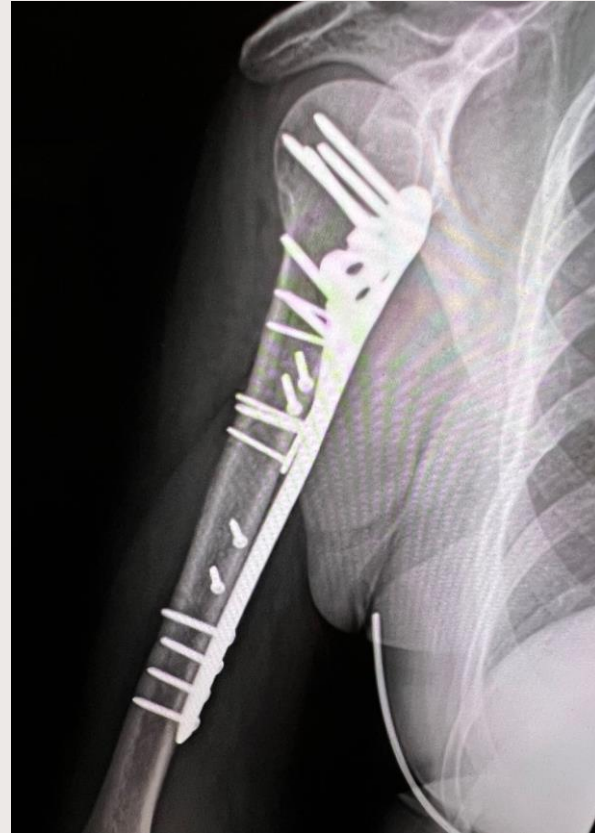
Elbow Fracture/Dislocation



Elbow Fracture/Dislocation



Shoulder Fracture





Acute Shoulder Injuries

- Swing for the fences – patient will present saying they were playing a game when they made a very hard overhead smash or an awkward shot and had acute pain in their shoulder
- Patient will report pain that began with that event
- Pain with playing and other activity following the event
- Concern is typically soft tissue injury, particularly rotator cuff tear, after this event
- Potentially preventable with shoulder strengthening

Injury Prevention

- Mainstay of treatment should be prevention of injury
- Common sense approach can help prevent both lower and upper extremity injuries
- Specific tools to help prevent shoulder injuries
- Goal is to keep you on the court!

Avoiding Acute Injury

- Don't let a pickleball fall happen to you!
- Play on a dry, clean court – do not play on wet surfaces or on courts with loose sand or dirt
- Wear good footwear
- Avoid backpedaling – turn and sidestep to run after a ball headed overhead

Avoiding a Fall on the Court

- Know your court surroundings for any hazards
- Communicate with your partner to avoid collisions
- Don't try to be a hero!



Know When to Say When

- Is it really worth it?
- The heroic dive for a shot may seem worth it in the moment, but recognize that suffering an injury for a casual game of pickleball probably isn't worth it
- Live to play another day!



Be a Shoulder Boy Scout – Be Prepared

- Preparation can help prevent chronic injuries
- In addition to warm up and stretching the day of playing regular shoulder stretching and strengthening exercises can help prevent injury from developing
- These are particularly important for someone who has a history of a shoulder problem, but can be used even in shoulders that have never had a problem
- We brought a set of home shoulder stretching and strengthening exercises that I recommend doing on a regular basis to help maintain shoulder conditioning and prevent injury

Shoulder health in the aging athlete

- Preventative measures are the most important way to avoid both acute and overuse injuries. Remember the goal: keep you on the court or on the course.
- Treatment of most overuse injuries typically begins with conservative measures with surgery reserved for patients who do not improve with conservative care.
- Pickleball can lead to severe acute injury, but safety on the court can help prevent these injuries!

Thank you and play
safe

Dr. John Hinson

Palm Beach Orthopaedic Institute