

Rotator Cuff: When a Tear is Not a Problem

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Shoulder Pain in the 50 Year Old

Why is everything blamed on the rotator cuff?
When is a tear not a tear?

Questions to Ask

- **Where is the pain**
- **When did it start? gradual or traumatic**
- **Pain at night?**
- **Can you pick up kettle/ Do your hair / reach behind your back?**
- **Any neck / neuro / respiratory or cardiac symptoms**
- **Past hx ;thyroid/ diabetes /anticoagulant**

Make Diagnosis

- **Based on age, history and examination**

Confirm Diagnosis with MRI

Two Clinical Cases

- **MRI report identical**
- **One cuff tear needing repair**
- **One Frozen shoulder needing reassurance steroid injection and time to heal**

Case 1 – True Cuff Tear

- Slip and fall in bathroom onto shoulder
- Acute severe pain “thought it was broken”
- Unable to elevate the arm the next day
- Presently pain at night / can not lie on this side
- Function waist to shoulder only
- Can not lift kettle
- Stiff or not on supine exam

Case 2 Fake Cuff = Frozen Shoulder

- Sore after painting entire house
- Worse over the next few weeks
- Presently pain at night / can not lie on this side
- Function waist to shoulder only
- Can pick up kettle but painful
- Stiff on supine exam

MRI Same for Both Cases

- **Partial full thickness tear of supraspinatus leading edge.**
- **Degenerative ac joint**
- **Mild Glenohumeral arthropathy**
- **Subacromial bursistis**
- **Mild decrease in acromiohumeral interval**

Treatment

- Case 1
- Case 2

Thank you