

## THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR PHYSICAL THERAPY COMMITMENT

Post Surgery Physical  
Therapy is Very Important to  
a Smooth Recovery.



Gary Dragon, Jr. has 18 years of experience as a physical therapist and opened Action Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine in July of 2005. Gary received his bachelor's degree in Kinesiology while working as a student trainer for LSU football, baseball and women's soccer teams. He then went on to receive a master's and doctorate degree in physical therapy from the University of St. Augustine. While being a certified manual therapist providing one-on-one hands-on physical therapy, he also specializes in the rehabilitation of orthopedic and sports related injuries.

**W**hether related to surgery, injury or even just wear-and-tear, pain of the joints and muscles can interfere with our daily functioning, disrupt our sleep patterns and generally wreak havoc on our lives. Often prescribed by doctors to address pain, physical therapy is a type of medical treatment aimed at rebuilding strength and flexibility through a series of specialized exercises and rehabilitation techniques. While research has proven it can be an equally effective alternative to costly surgeries and prescription medication, it can only deliver results when the patient is committed.

### What happens if you quit before completion?

Work, school, children, traffic, weather...there are many obstacles in a person's life that could interfere with his ability to fulfill this commitment. Action Physical Therapy owner Gary Dragon cautions against pre-maturely halting this treatment. "The patient could remain in pain, be unable to function normally or, in the worse case scenario, both. Additionally, if the patient doesn't finish his plan of care, he could require return visits to the doctor for the same complaints resulting in further testing and medical expenses as well as the potential for surgical intervention."

## TIPS TO HELP YOU KEEP GOING

- Understand the treatment and ask questions. Knowing where you stand when you begin and where you're expected to be at completion will help motivate you to get there.
- Find a facility with sufficient hours that offers a no-hassle policy for rescheduling and cancellation.
- Dress comfortably. Appearance isn't important here and you need to be able to move freely during the treatment. If you're coming from or going to work, bring a change of clothes.
- Speak up. If you experience pain during a particular exercise, share that feeling with your therapist. Adjustments can be made on the spot to ensure you are challenged but also pain-free.



## A Quick Warm-up Prevents Injury

*When you are in a rush, you may be tempted to skip your pre-exercise warm-up. But, there are important reasons to always warm-up before you get into an active exercise routine. A warm-up gets blood circulating to the muscles and gets the heart pumping, increasing overall body temperature. If you are about to go for a run, a brisk walk to a light jog will prep your muscles for the running pace that follows. If you are going to lift weights, getting blood flow to the muscles before you start lifting will help **reduce injury and muscle soreness**. If you don't want to walk on a treadmill—the traditional five to ten minute warm-up, there are other effective exercises that will warm the entire body in a shorter period of time. Wood chops and swings are two easy warm-up exercises. The weight choice should be light and not heavy, because the idea is to increase cardio output and not strain the muscles during the warm-up.*

### Medicine Ball Swing

Grasp a 10 pound medicine ball with both hands. Stand with your feet hip-width apart, hold the ball over your head. With momentum, swing the ball down through your legs; bend the knees slightly to warm the legs and support the lower back. The ball should swing all the way through your legs. Keep your back flat and straight, bend from your waist and slightly at the knees. Quickly return to the overhead swing.

*Continue swinging up and down for one minute.*



### Medicine Ball Wood Chops

Grasp a 10 pound medicine ball with both hands. Stand with your feet hip-width apart, hold the ball overhead toward the right side of the body. Shift your weight slightly to the right leg; point the left foot. Use momentum to swing the ball down as you twist at your waist, bending the knees to bring the ball to the left side of the body. Do not twist the legs or knees, only twist from the waist.

*Continue swinging up and down for one minute then switch to the left side.*

**R**otator cuff tears can be nagging and annoying when minor and debilitating when major. An understanding of what is involved in the injury is key for a fast and efficient recovery. Here is a quick guide to a torn rotator cuff:

### **WHAT IS A ROTATOR CUFF TEAR?**

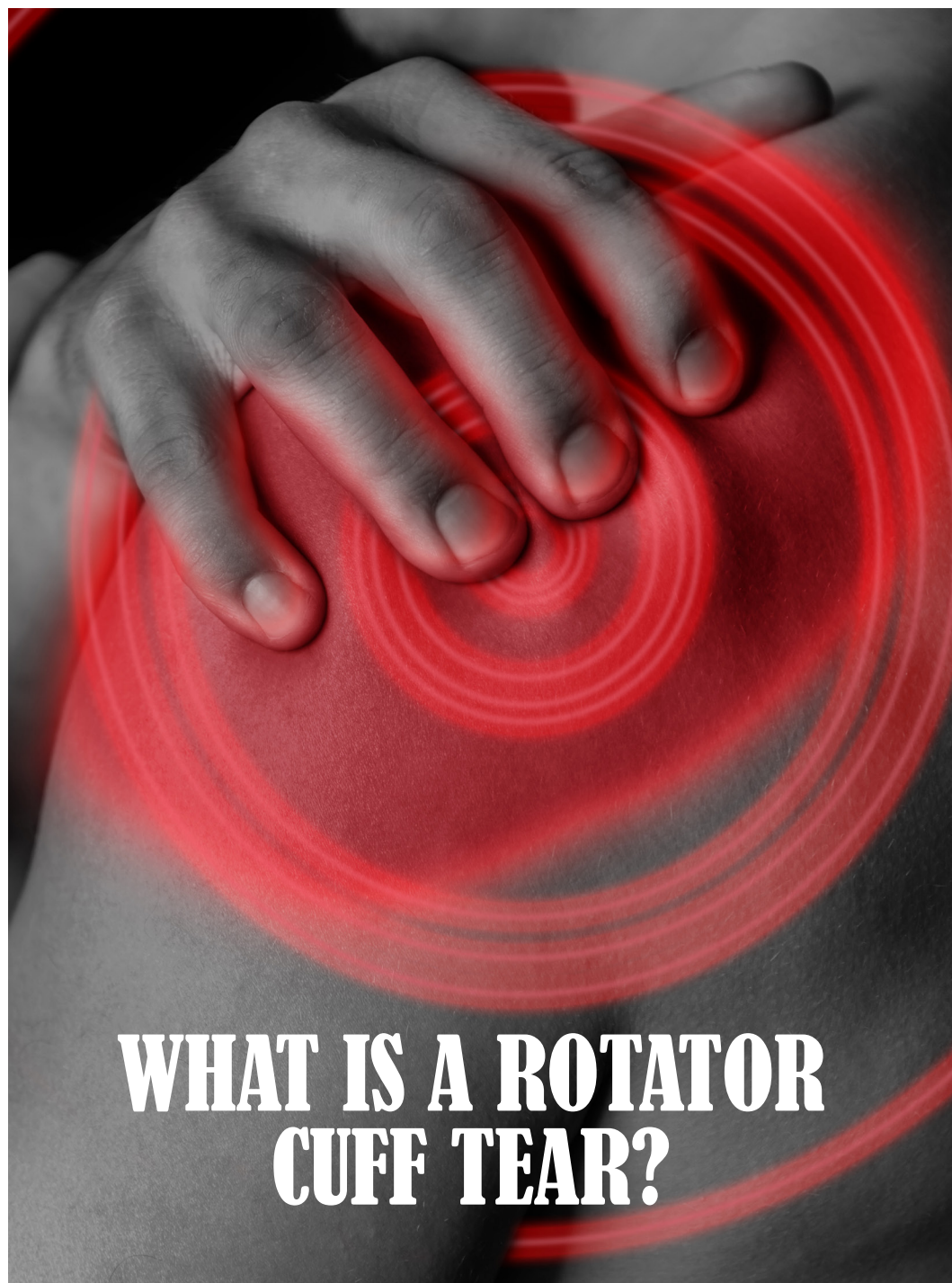
The rotator cuff is literally a cuff of muscles that become tendons closer to the shoulder joint. They help to keep the humerus in its socket and are also necessary to lift and rotate the arm. When this set of muscles and tendons gets damaged, that injury is referred to as a rotator cuff tear. One way to visualize the tear is to picture strings connecting the top of the shoulder to the upper arm and to picture one of those strings fraying. The arm won't become useless or fall off if one of the strings frays or breaks, but it will certainly become more difficult to control.

### **WHO IS SUSCEPTIBLE TO ROTATOR CUFF TEARS?**

In most cases, a torn rotator cuff occurs because of one of two reasons or a combination of them. Aging is the main factor in a rotator cuff tear. The second factor is overuse. Repetitive motions can cause wear and tear on tendons and result in the damage that results in the rotator cuff tearing. What this means is that an older person who performs the same motion over and over again is highly vulnerable to developing a torn rotator cuff. That motion may be a golf swing, a tennis serve, or stocking shelves at a grocery store.

### **WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF A TORN ROTATOR CUFF?**

One key sign of a rotator cuff tear is pain. Usually, it won't be the sharp searing pain normally associated with a muscle tear but a dull, nagging ache. The pain will be worse when the arm is held in some positions than in others, but will persist. While not necessarily debilitating, the pain of a torn rotator cuff can be severe enough to affect sleep.



## **WHAT IS A ROTATOR CUFF TEAR?**

Weakness of the arm is another sign that a rotator cuff has been torn. The weakness may only be an issue during a particular motion or a small part of a range of motion. For example, it may be easy for someone to lift their elbows a few inches away from their torso but difficult to bring them level with their shoulders.

### **CAN A ROTATOR CUFF TEAR GET BETTER OVER TIME?**

Minor rotator cuff tears can improve

with time, but major ones may need surgery to fix and are sometimes unfixable. Once the surgery is completed, a Physical Therapist will continue treatment until you are healed.

When a rotator cuff tear is fixable, physical therapy will play a major role in rehabilitation. The right exercise regimen can help to rebuild strength and relieve pain after a rotator cuff tear.



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# Your Wellness Newsletter

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## A Note From Dr. Dragon PT



*As owner of **Action Physical Therapy**, it has been a pleasure to serve the Slidell community for the past 16 years. We have taken great pride in giving our patients top quality, hands on care. If you are suffering with shoulder or knee pain, or any other body aches and pains, we would love to see you. We are*

*ready to work with our established patients and look forward to establishing new relationships. Please enjoy this newsletter on shoulder and knee pain. Come visit us and let us get you Back into ACTION.*



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