



Swimming Injuries and Their Management

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Grew up in Canberra, ACT with a passion for Rugby before a career ending injury decided his future would lie in other pursuits; namely Physiotherapy and the education and empowerment of his clients.

He founded Physio INQ in 2006, establishing his first practice in the outer suburbs of Sydney. This quickly grew to incorporate over 8 practices; all owned and managed with Irene Georgakopoulos, his business partner.

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Together they employ roughly 40 full time staff, with modern education and a professional support network of GP's, specialists and other allied health practitioners.

He has found a new love. Writing. It is his way of spreading the collective wisdom of himself, his staff, his mentors and his business associates to the public. Most of his resources are free as he believes that when you empower people, they make sound decisions. It has grown his clinics immeasurably over the years.

Today you will find him splitting his time between his other great love, writing and directing for film, as well as the odd day on the gold course.

Looking at Impairments

Generally speaking, the medical establishment has a set list of injuries that have been researched and studied and a set list of treatments are recommended to produce a statistically relevant outcome. Ie- if you have a shoulder impingement, and you do scapular exercises, then you have a 70% chance of overcoming the injury. Sounds good? Not likely. The chances are you will be the one in the 30%.

The error that established medicine has is that you cannot put the person's body into a state of control. We are all different, we have all had different pasts, upbringing, habits, postures, hobbies etc. We are all not created equal. If we treat each injury as it comes to the clinic in the same way, then we ignore the individuality of the injury itself. What may have been contributing to the injury apart from the exercise itself? What are the co contributing factors? What is stopping it from healing itself? Why does one person with terrible posture have no pain, when I have great posture and terrible pain?

It is all about impairments.

Impairments are found by looking at the entire body, not just the local area of concern. The old adage that the elbow is somehow connected to the shin bone is quite true. Our bodies are made up of muscles, joints, ligaments and slings. These slings are fibrous bands of tissue that literally connect everything to everything. If one sling is tight, then a muscle further up the chain can get sore, tight, pulled or torn. The problem is not the muscle itself, but the tension further down the kinetic chain.

Treating dysfunction and impairments, not the injury itself

At Physio INQ most of our practitioners operate to solve dysfunction and impairments. They assess whole body impairments. Emily Hoffman specializes in swimming injuries, with a tremendous focus on improving impairments to gain further stroke enhancement.

When we treat the impairments and not the injury, it gives the body a chance to heal. Combining this with tried and tested methods of rehabilitation in a classic setting and our results have been tremendous.

We have an extremely hands on philosophy and utilize the time in the clinic to specifically address things that we can change, but the athlete cannot. Massage, manipulation, mobilization, muscle energy techniques and dry needling are therapies the athlete is unable to perform themselves, making the sessions in the clinic very valuable for the allotted time.

With respects to exercise, we do get the athletes to perform exercises to improve their impairments, but we encourage self discovery, self drive and independent rehab outside of the clinic. If they can do it at home, they shouldn't waste their time in the clinic.



Absolutely no recipes.

And lastly, we do not have recipes for injuries. It is all based off the assessment. Simply saying, I have a rotator cuff injury and I need to strengthen completely misses all of the contributing factors that may have caused the rotator cuff to become damaged in the first place.

Every client is an individual, every client needs to have a complete body assessment from foot to head, and every client needs to have their impairments addressed.

Insanity Principle

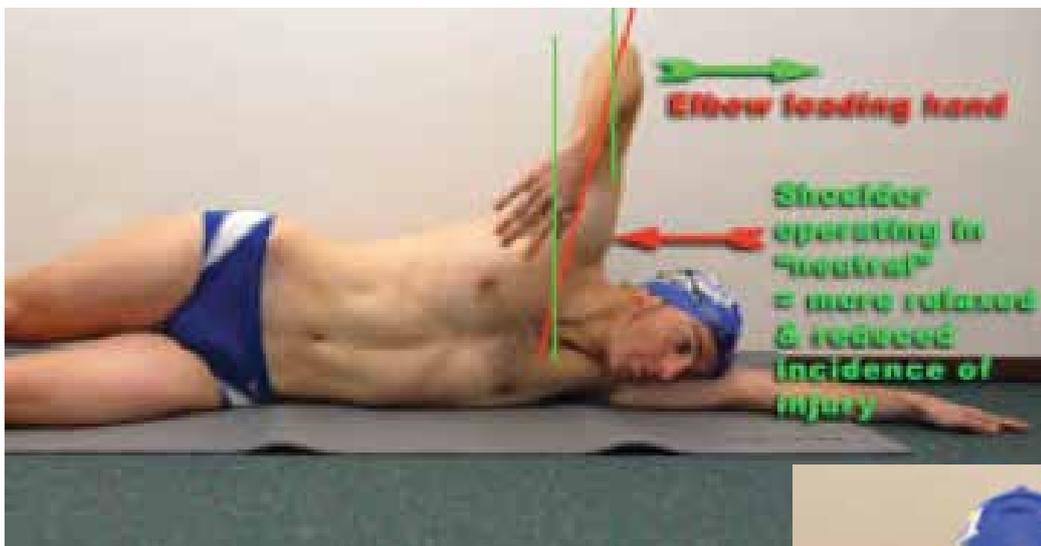
Our practitioners are also well versed in the concept of not repeating the same thing over and over when it isn't working. It just doesn't make sense. They will try different things each and every session until they figure out what works for that individual and what will make that athlete perform better. It is this critical aspect that will keep athletes training longer and stronger, limit down time in the pool or field and improve their overall level of compliance with training.

We work closely with coaches, are easily accessible and provide prompt and timely service to all of our clients.

General Tips on Shoulder Injury Prevention

1. Body Rotation

Developing a good, symmetrical body rotation through the development of an efficient bilateral breathing pattern is key to removing shoulder injury. Swimming with a flat body in the water with limited rotation along the long axis of the spine causes the arms to swing around the side during the recovery phase.

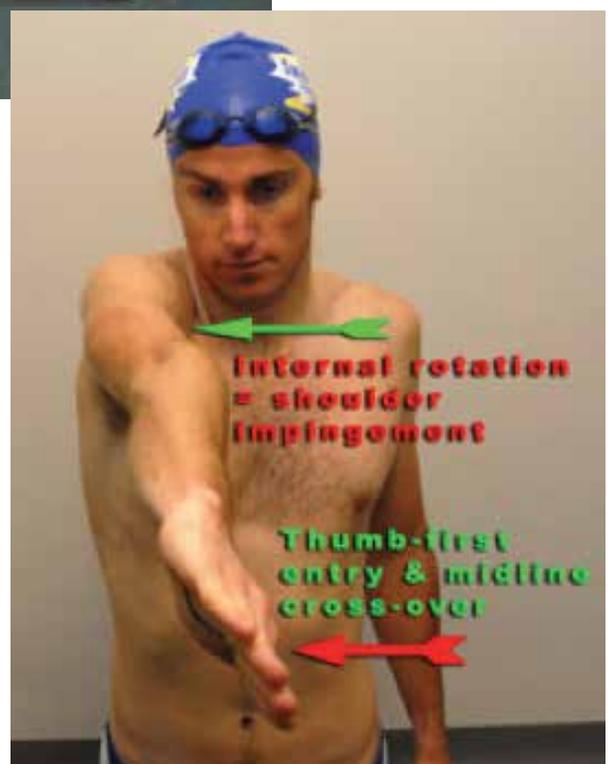


Good body rotation.

This swinging action results in large amounts of internal rotation at the shoulder joint which is the major source of impingement and rotator cuff issues. By using several key technique drills this can be easily addressed and fixed.

For more information on rotation see our article on body roll in freestyle.

Avoid thumb first entry.



2. Hand Placement into Water

A hand pitch outwards with a thumb first entry into the water leads to excessive internal rotation which, from approx 3200 strokes per hour, can eventually lead to acute pain in the shoulder as an 'over-use' injury. Instead of entering thumb first, change your technique to enter with a flat hand, finger tip first.



Enter the water with a flat hand facing the bottom of the pool.



400m Women's Final In Beijing. All swimmers using flat hand entries.

3. Swimming Posture

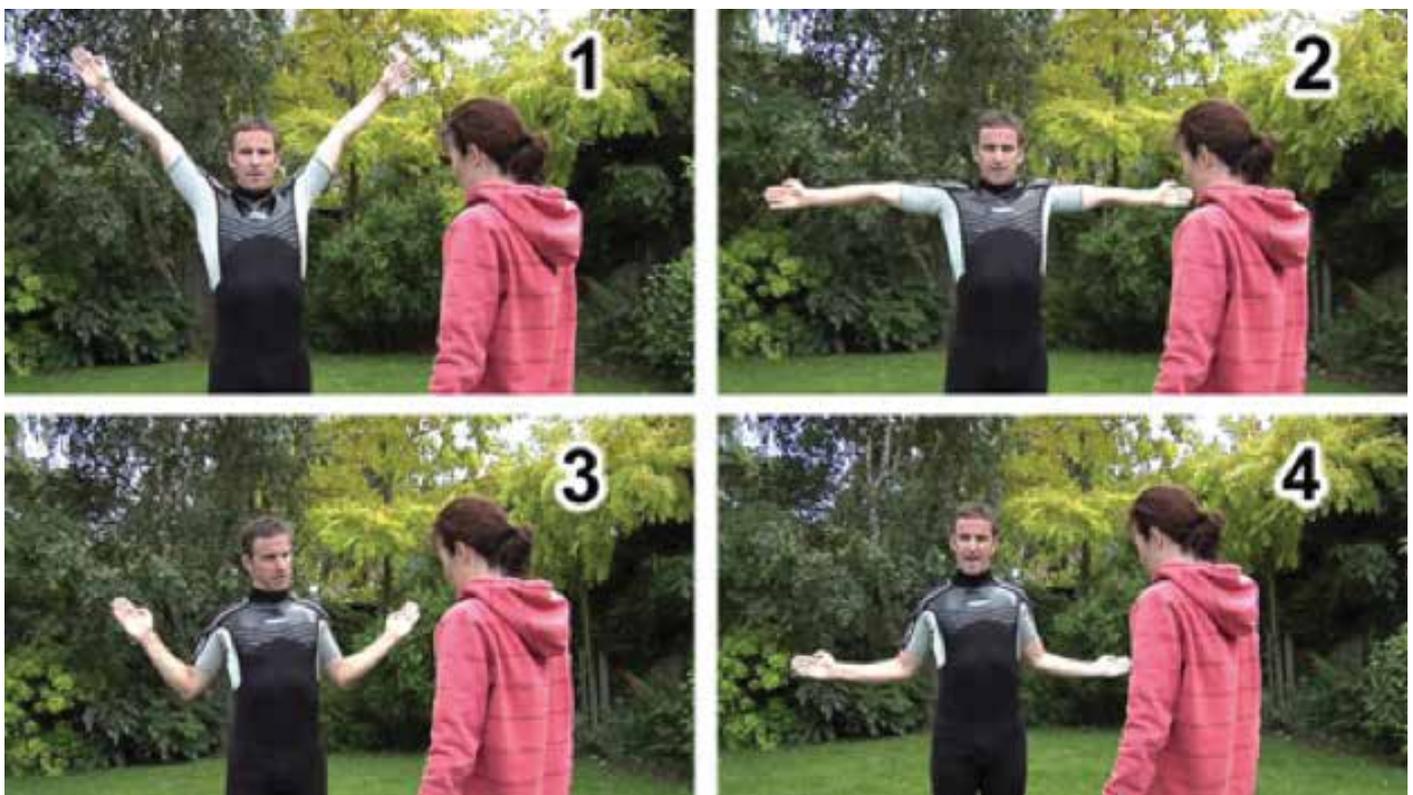
Many swimmers don't give due attention to their upper body posture when swimming. If you inherit poor posture from your daily working life it can really affect how your muscles work when in the pool or ocean.

Poor posture can lead to impingement, often through a severe cross over at the front of the stroke.

This can easily be improved by working on flexibility in the muscles at the front of the shoulder and chest. Doing this together with improved stabilisation of the muscles at the back of the shoulder improves posture and removes cross-over at the front of the stroke.

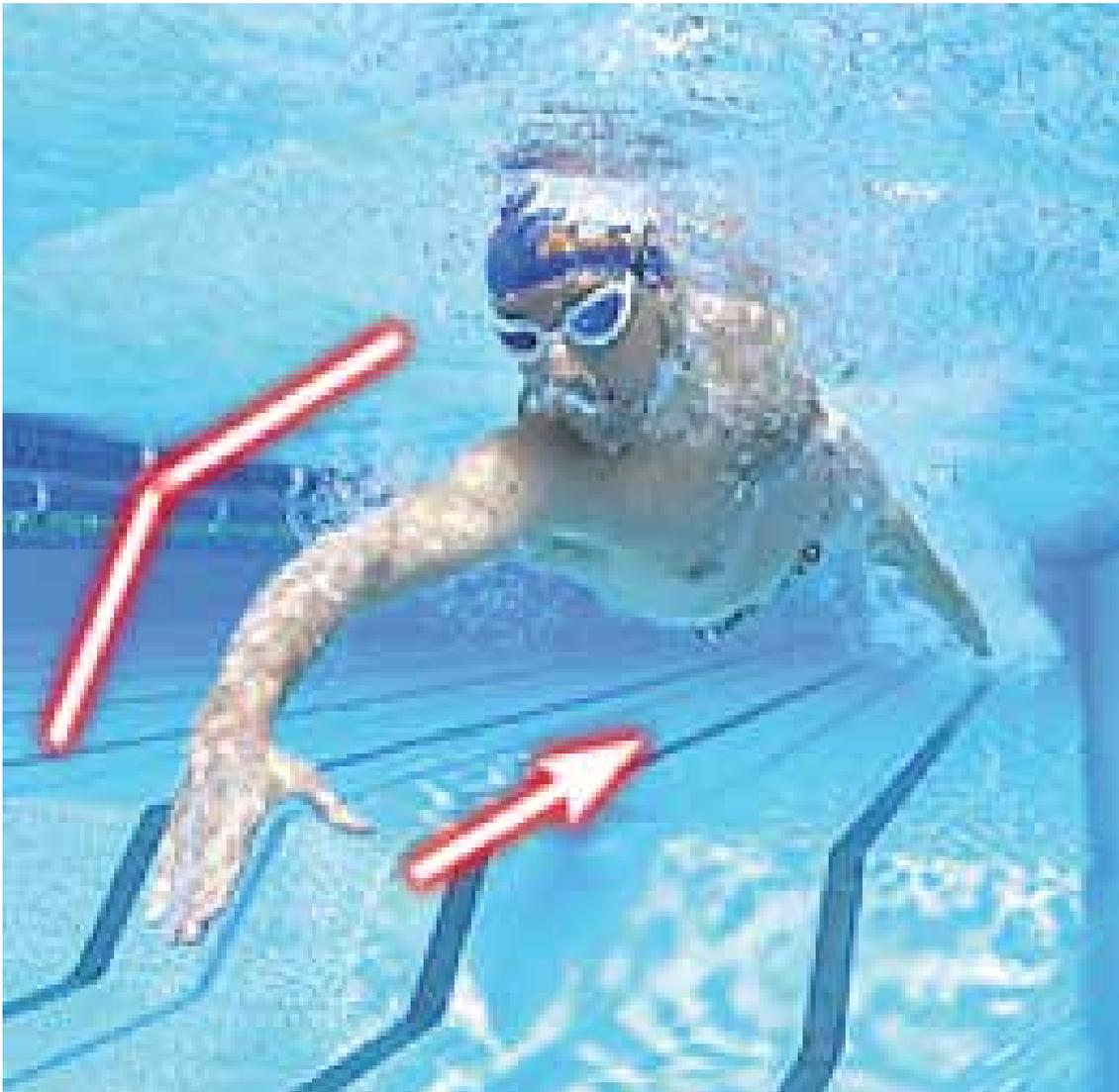
To start to introduce better posture while you swim, think "shoulders back, chest forward".

Improved alignment and posture means that the power of the pull phase is dramatically improved because you are now applying propulsion straight backwards, the direction that will send you forward as efficiently as possible - great technique!



The YTWL exercise is great for tuning into better posture.

4. Catch and Pull Through



Paul Newsome demonstrates a high elbow catch and pull technique.

Without the use of video analysis, many swimmers are unaware of how they pull through under the water.

Typically swimmers will pull through with either a dropped elbow or with a very straight arm. Doing so loads the shoulder muscles excessively as the majority of the pull through phase is spent pushing down, rather than pressing back.

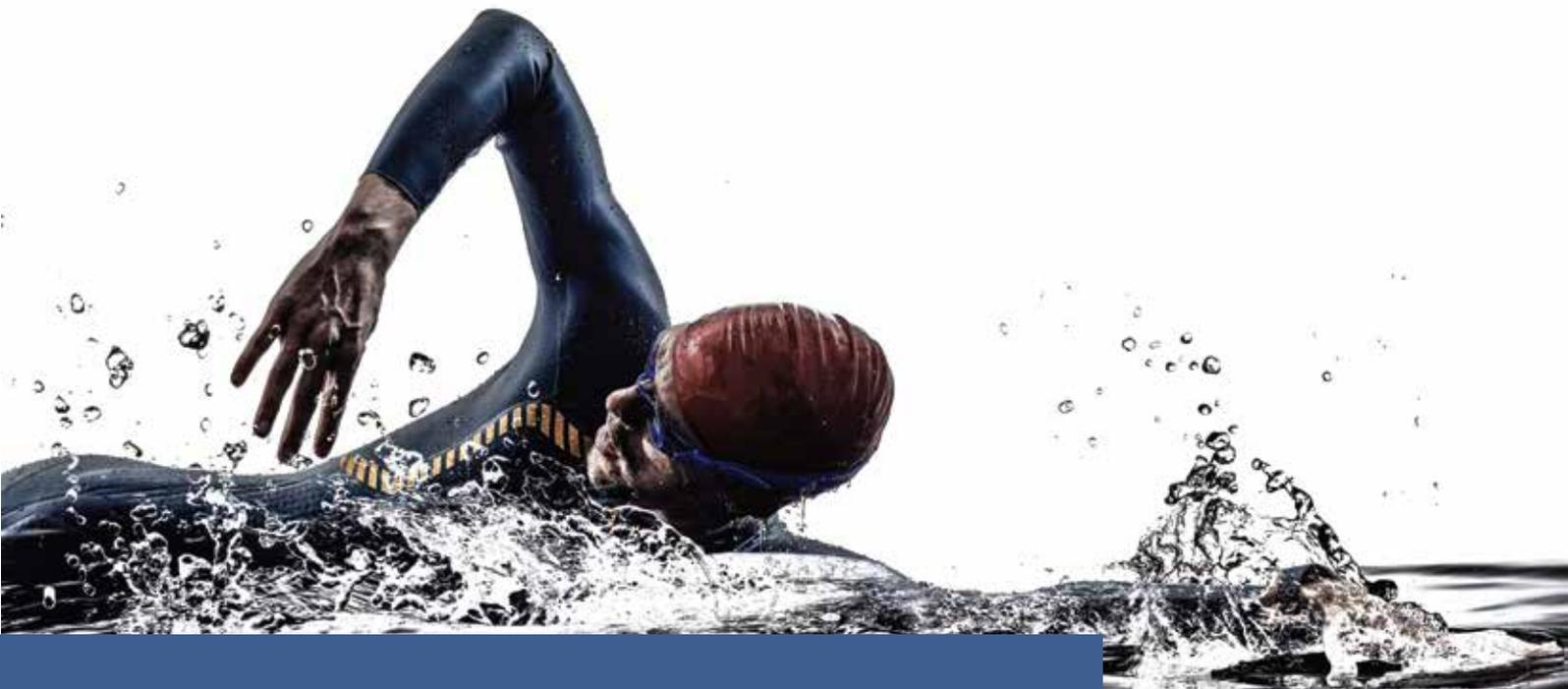
Working to develop a high elbow catch technique with enhanced swimming posture will really help you utilise the larger, more powerful muscle groups of your chest and upper back, rather than rely upon the shoulders.

Summary

A good swimming technique will have the following factors in place, consistently:

1. Bilateral breathing for at least 80% of your training sessions. There are many times (especially in the open water) when unilateral breathing is the better option, but for a healthy, balanced freestyle stroke technique, bilateral breathing is the way to go in training.
2. Good, symmetrical body rotation. This can be worked upon through a range of different body rotation drills, often employing fins for support.
3. Hand entry into the water is finger tip first, not thumb first despite what you may have been taught when you learnt to swim!
4. Avoiding midline cross over at the front of the stroke.
5. Developing and maintaining of good upper body posture.
6. Targeting a high elbow (bent arm) catch and pull through.





Swim safe!



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Physio INQ is part of a network of Physio clinics across Australia, employing and empowering the highest quality of practical and support staff

We are a cutting edge business of superb ethical standards, striving to be the most professional and personal health care business you will come across.

Physio INQ, originally Greater West Physio was established to get rid of the old school and bring in the new. Our practitioners have open minds, strong hands and an unwavering goal to improve the lives of every client we come across. Our mission is simple- to bring quality health care to the common man in a way that is personable, professional and memorable.

Through the utilization of our Unique Total Care Philosophy Framework, through to the efficient and clean paperless offices we are driving, to the embracement of the digital age with online bookings, exercise prescription and more, Physio INQ is moving with you.

Focusing on the family unit, we have developed a training program of our staff to be better communicators and mediators of health. Our aim is to have a completely open and transparent health relationship with all of our clients from day one.

Every clinic is run by locals for locals. Being Powered By Physio INQ is a sign of corporate care. We train, cultivate and embrace only the brightest local talents and aim to deliver our service with a strong community focus.