This document was created by a medical student enrolled in the Rural Physicians Associate Program (RPAP) at the University of Minnesota Medical School as part of the course project. The aim of the project is to present information on a medical topic in the format of a patient education handout. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Minnesota Medical School physicians and faculty. These materials are provided for informational purposes only and are in no way intended to take the place of the advice and recommendations of your personal health care provider. The information provided may no longer be up-to-date since it has not been reviewed since the date of creation. The information provided should not be used to diagnose a health problem or disease, or as a means of determining treatment. In the event of a medical emergency, immediately contact a doctor or call 911.
What about surgery?

Studies show people with surgery may feel better sooner. But in the long run they are no better off than people that don’t have surgery. Surgery costs a lot more money and has more risks. Surgical risks are minimized really well by surgeons. People with more problems than just the tight space are more likely to have surgery. They might have things like tears in parts of the shoulder. People that don’t get better after physical therapy may also benefit from surgery.

Need more info?

Basic:
Cleveland Clinic:
http://my.clevelandclinic.org/disorders/shoulder/hic_impingement_syndrome_of_the_shoulder.aspx
American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons:
http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=a00032

Advanced:
Medscape:
http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/92974-overview

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Images borrowed from Microsoft Word and AAOS website and author’s own portfolio
What is Subacromial Impingement Syndrome?

It's a shoulder injury causing pain when lifting your arm. It is caused by a tighter space for the muscle attachment of the shoulder to pass through. Problems with the bone, muscle attachment or the parts around it can make the space tighter.

What does it feel like?

Pinching pain with movement like raising your hand, brushing your hair, etc. As it worsens it can cause dull discomfort at rest and even affect sleep.

What makes it worse?

Repeated motions over the head like in swimming, tennis, painting or lifting items

Poor posture and form in other ways of over-use can also make the problem worse.

How do I know I have it?

Your doctor will listen to your history, check your shoulder motions, and maybe get an x-ray.

How do I treat it?

Rest the shoulder! Try to do fewer of the motions that caused the problem.
Ice the shoulder with ice in a cloth for about 15 minutes a couple times a day.
Use medicines like naproxen and ibuprofen that your doctor recommends.
See a physical therapist to learn appropriate methods to:
  Stretch your shoulder muscles.
  Strengthen your shoulder muscles.
  Do tasks to ease the pain in your shoulder.
  Laser therapy
Steroid injection into the joint for symptom relief
Occasionally surgery will be the appropriate choice, but usually not.