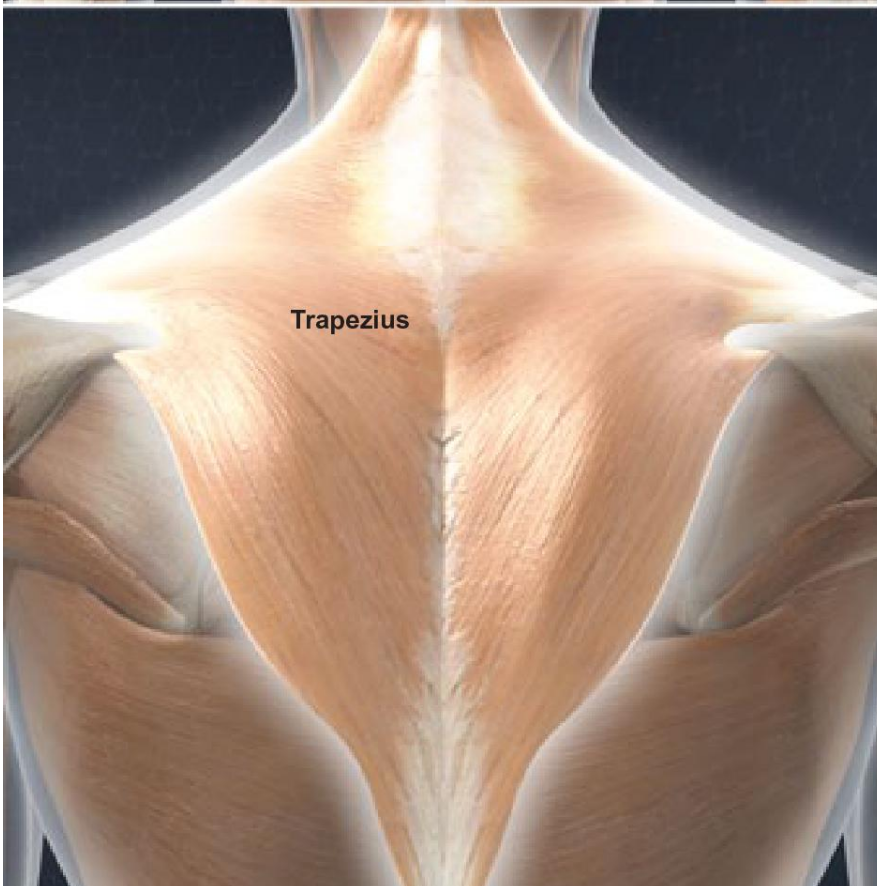




Muscle Strain of the Upper Back (Trapezius Strain)



Overview

This common injury is a stretching or tearing of the trapezius. This large muscle group spans the upper back, shoulders and neck. These muscles are commonly called the "trap" muscles.

Anatomy

The trapezius is divided into left and right sides. Each side is further divided into sections. These specialized sections help move the shoulder blades, the neck and the head. The trapezius also helps control the upper chest when a person breathes.

Causes

Trapezius strains are commonly caused by overuse. Working at a keyboard or driving for extended periods can place stress on these muscles. Cradling a phone between the ear and shoulder, carrying a heavy bag or playing a musical instrument for hours at a time can cause trapezius pain. These muscles are also commonly injured during weightlifting, or during contact sports.

Symptoms

Symptoms of a trapezius strain depend on which part of the muscle is injured. Symptoms may include stiffness, soreness, and aching and burning sensations. This pain may radiate from the shoulders through the upper back and neck. The injured area may feel warm and tingly. It may swell. The person may have a headache. These symptoms may worsen with activity.

Treatment

Treatment options may include rest, ice and anti-inflammatory medications. Physical therapy or massage therapy may also be recommended.