

# MyoRehab Not A Creature Was Stirring...

By Victoria L. Magown, CMTPT

“...not even a mouse”, or so the story goes. There was a time when the word mouse referred to a small furry rodent. Now when we use the word mouse, it conjures up a different image in our minds. Those of us who spend hours sitting in front of a computer wondering where our aches and pains come from, have a different image of the word *mouse*.

The use of a mouse, key board or 10-key pad for hours at a time can cause injury no less painful than those sustained by truck drivers, carpenters, bricklayers, etc. As early as 1951, an industrial disease called Occupational Myalgia referred to injuries specific to muscles involved in the use of another modern miracle, the typewriter. Not much has changed.

Typing or keying on a keyboard or using a mouse requires constant contraction of the muscles in the hand, forearm, upper arm and shoulder. To know what this feels like, try holding your arm out in front of you for as long as possible. After only a few minutes, you'll notice a burning pain somewhere in your shoulder. This is what happens when you keep muscles contracted for a long period of time, as when working at the computer for hours on end.

Rachel, a bookkeeper, came to MyoRehab with tingling and pain in her right hand and pain in the forearm, upper arm and shoulder. She had been suffering with this problem for 2 years with no relief from anti-inflammatory medications or other types of therapy.

Many practitioners treated the obvious muscles of the hand and forearm with modest success, but the pain persisted. One possible reason for this could have been failure to treat the less obvious muscles, the subscapularis (Illustration A) and the pectoralis minor (Illustration B).

Notice the pain pattern of the subscapularis. This muscle attaches to the front surface of the shoulder blade and extends out to the front of the shoulder. The pain pattern for this muscle is the back of the shoulder and most notably, the wrist.

The other key muscle, the pectoralis minor, lies under the pectoralis major. It assists in moving the shoulder forward

and also pulls it down. When Rachel used the mouse or keyboard, the constant motion of the shoulder kept the pectoralis minor contracted. The nerves and arteries of the arms and hands pass under the pectoralis minor as they travel down the arm to the hand. When this muscle is contracted, it can restrict blood flow and press on the nerves causing tingling and numbness.

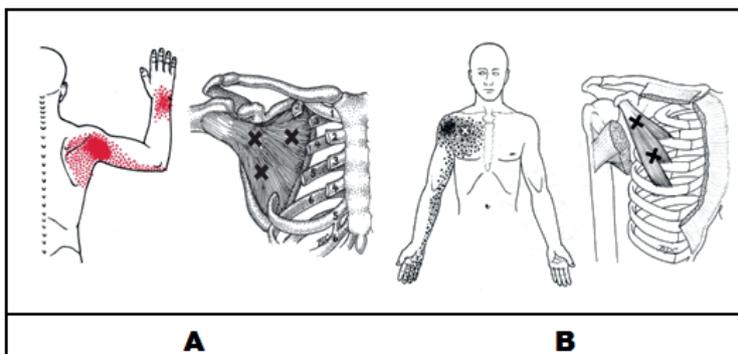
After treating these muscles and giving Rachel a specific Home Exercise Program, her pain was gone. She also reported that the tingling and numbness in her hand had completely disappeared. Rachel was delighted that she could now type pain-free.

A key part of the success with Rachel's treatment was addressing factors that perpetuated her pain. She learned that using a mouse would aggravate her shoulder pain. Switching to a thumb track ball gave her more permanent relief. Also, changing the position of the keyboard, so that it was closer to her body, allowed her elbows to be at a 90° angle. The

track ball was also positioned on the same level as her keyboard.

Another important change was the position of her calculator. She had been turning her body to the right and reaching behind her to use the calculator on another desk. Now she understands the importance of keeping all her equipment within easy reach so as not to overstress the muscles. When Rachel made these adjustments, she no longer had difficulty with recurring pain and aching in her hands, forearms, upper arms and shoulders.

Is there a mouse in your life causing you pain? Give us a call at 505-872-3100 and set up an appointment. Come to MyoRehab and find out how our “Team Approach” can work for you.



*MyoRehab's practitioners treat as a team; with two practitioners treating you (most often) and discussing your case to further resolve your pain. For more information and a better understanding of Myofascial Pain and Dysfunction, visit us on our website at [www.myorehab.com](http://www.myorehab.com).*