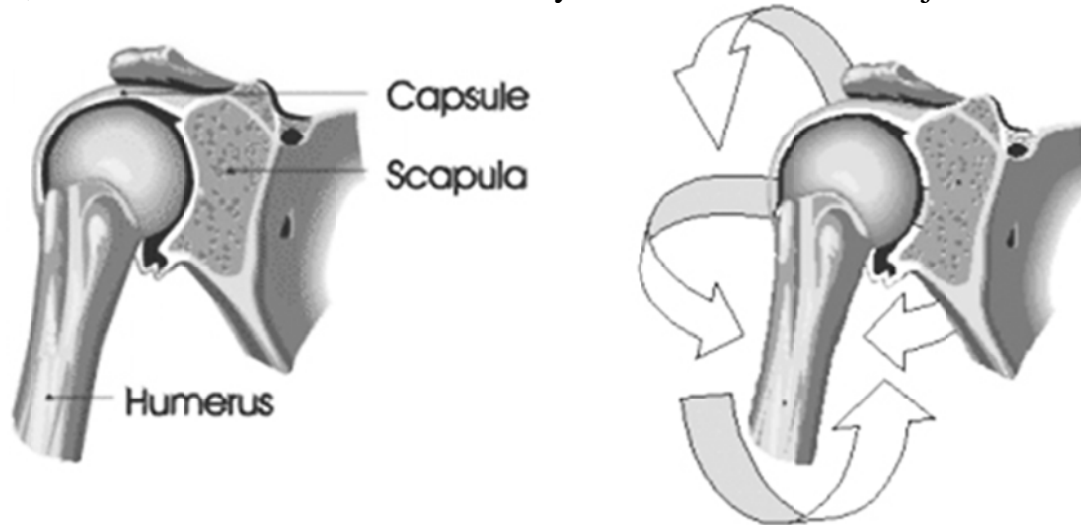


SHOULDER:

Instability • Dislocation • Labral Tears

The shoulder is the most mobile joint in the body, but to have this amount of motion, it is also less stable and more likely to dislocate than other joints.



The shoulder works like a ball and socket joint, but the bones are much more like a golf ball on a tee. The **labrum** is a ring of specialized cartilage tissue around the rim of the glenoid (the tee) that makes the glenoid more like a socket and makes the shoulder much more stable. The rotator cuff muscles are also very important for shoulder stability and they play a large part in the rehabilitation from injury or surgery.

In a younger person's shoulder, the labrum is often torn when the shoulder **dislocates** (*the ball comes all the way out of the socket*) or the shoulder **subluxes** (*the ball comes partially out of the socket*). The labrum can also be damaged or torn with repetitive overhead use of the arm such as in throwing, tennis, and rock climbing. Damage to the labrum can be painful by itself, but most of the pain and disability comes from abnormal motion when the shoulder is used. The shoulder can also be unstable due to ligament or capsular **laxity** (*looseness*) and not specifically from a torn labrum.

Labral injuries and shoulder instability can occur in a variety of locations and patterns. The most common of these is an **anterior labral tear** (in the front of the shoulder), usually the result of a subluxation or dislocation in the front of the shoulder.