



241 Clarence St.
Ottawa, ON K1N 5P9

(613) 302-3117

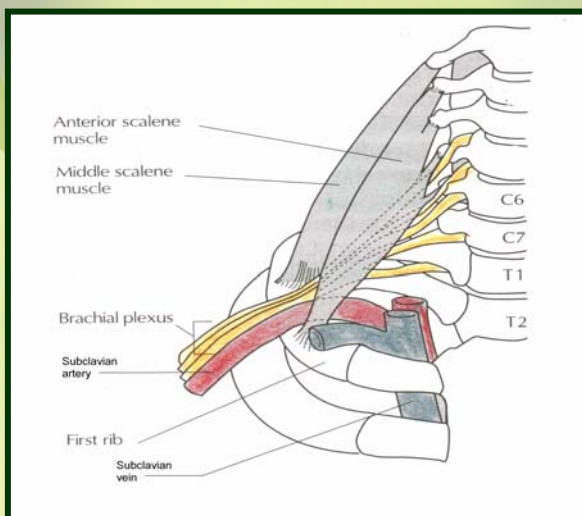
leeann@SolomonMassage.com

ANTERIOR SCALENE SYNDROME

MAY 2007 NEWSLETTER

Thoracic outlet syndrome is a general term and condition where the nerve bundle and artery supplying the arm and hand is compressed, causing a variety of symptoms, including pain. The cause of the compression can be from a number of things, but for this article I'll focus specifically on the scalene muscles in the neck.

The scalenes are 3 separate muscles which run from the side of the neck vertebrae to the first two ribs, and are named for their anatomical placement: posterior, middle, and anterior. In addition to rotating and flexing the neck, the scalenes also help elevate the ribs when you inhale, giving your organs more room to expand. Scalenes are working very hard when: breathing is labored; you habitually breathe with the chest instead of the belly; or you've been coughing hard and often. This results in short, tight muscles with trigger points (knots). Examples of possible causes are asthma; emphysema; pneumonia; bronchitis; allergies; playing wind instruments; working long hours with arms out front; pulling, lifting & carrying heavy loads; wearing a heavy backpack & not using the waist/chest strap; sports activities; whiplash; emotional tension or nervous hyperventilation; poor posture (head forward/slouching).



An artery and a bundle of nerves called the brachial plexus pass between the middle and anterior scalene muscles and over top of the first rib. When these scalene muscles are tight, short, and rigid, the first rib is perpetually elevated, leaving less room for the artery and nerves to function properly. Compression on these structures and trigger points in the muscles is what causes aching or throbbing pain in the neck, shoulder, upper arm, chest, shoulder blade, forearm, thumb and index finger. Numbness, tingling, weakness, coldness and swelling may occur in the forearm and hand, and is often mistaken for carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS). If you know someone

considering hand surgery for CTS, please have them investigate massage therapy first! I've met several people who have had the surgery and considered it unsuccessful because the symptoms eventually returned. This is because the sources of symptoms in the body aren't always found at (or even near) the problem site. **R.M.T.'s are trained to find and treat the sources of these nerve and vascular compressions.**

"I'm looking for a family doctor, but no one is taking new patients". Sound familiar? This site is for the regulatory body for physicians in Ontario and has a doctor search feature which will tell you who IS taking new patients. Good luck!

<http://www.cpsso.on.ca/default.htm>

See how your current doctor (or a potential new one) rates on a scale of 5 and what other patients are saying about them. Check out this site where you can also post your own comments!

<http://www.ratemds.com/canada/index.jsp>