What is rib dysfunction?

The rib cage is very mobile as we breathe in and out. The ribs move in a specific pattern, which is essential for us to get air into our lungs properly. A dysfunctional rib is a rib that does not coordinate its movements with the other ribs in this pattern. A dysfunction can lead to pain, muscle spasms, and difficulty breathing.

How does someone get rib dysfunction?

A rib can develop mobility problems many different ways. They can be caused by poor posture, asymmetrical muscle development, poor alignment of the spine, or acute trauma, including direct blows, rotational strains, forceful compression of the rib cage, or a simple coughing attack.

What does rib dysfunction feel like?

The symptoms are usually on one side, and it is painful with upon deep inspiration, exhalation, coughing or sneezing. Flexing forward, twisting, or bending to your side may increase the pain. The area may be painful to the touch.

What can I do to help the pain?

• Heat can be used over the painful area. This will help relieve pain and can help to relax the muscles that may be spasming to protect the injured area. However, if the rib pain was caused by an injury, wait at least 3 days to put heat over the area. This is because during this time, the joints will be inflamed. Applying heat to an inflamed area will only increase the symptoms and slow healing time.

• Gentle massage to the painful area may help to decrease the pain.

• Medication such as Ibuprofen (Advil) can be used to alleviate pain. Make sure to check with your physician before taking any medication.

• Even though you have pain, it is extremely important to maintain correct breathing. Adapting a shallow breathing pattern can lead to the development of other health conditions.