

Rare weight lifting injury required surgery

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A young, healthy man injured himself so severely while weight lifting that he required surgery and nearly a full week in the hospital to recover. The unusual case report of compartment syndrome to the shoulder will be reported online today in *Annals of Emergency Medicine* ("An Unusual Complication of Weightlifting: A Case Report").

"Typically, compartment syndrome is associated with the lower extremities, not the shoulder, and with trauma, not exercise," said lead study author Leonard Bunting, MD, FACEP, of Wayne State University in Detroit, Mich. "Our patient over-exerted himself so much by weight lifting that he put himself in danger of suffering permanent damage. This is a case where doing something theoretically healthy—weight training—actually caused serious injury."

A 23-year-old male came to the emergency department with [extreme pain](#) and swelling in his shoulder. He reported having lifted heavier weights than usual the day before. Surgery and aggressive inpatient treatment with [intravenous fluids](#) for six days provided complete relief of pain and recovery of a full range of motion.

"Apart from being an unusual complication of weight lifting, this case highlights the unique aspects of bedside ultrasound in evaluation of unusual musculoskeletal conditions," said Dr. Bunting. "The patient's pain was out of proportion to the injury, and a bedside ultrasound exam confirmed muscle [edema](#). The compartment pressures in the injured muscle were incredibly high. Fortunately, he received prompt treatment and went back to the gym a little wiser for the experience."

Provided by American College of Emergency Physicians

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