

Adhesive Capsulitis / Frozen Shoulder



Scan this QR Code to access a detailed video that enhances the information in this handout. It includes step by step guidance and visual demonstrations for each exercise.

What is a frozen shoulder?

Frozen shoulder is a condition where scar tissue forms along the shoulder joint capsule. Inflammation leads to pain, stiffness, and restricted range of motion. The exact cause is not well understood. Risk factors include trauma, immobilization of the shoulder, and chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, thyroid disease, or cardiovascular disease. In many cases, the exact cause is unknown.

How is it treated?

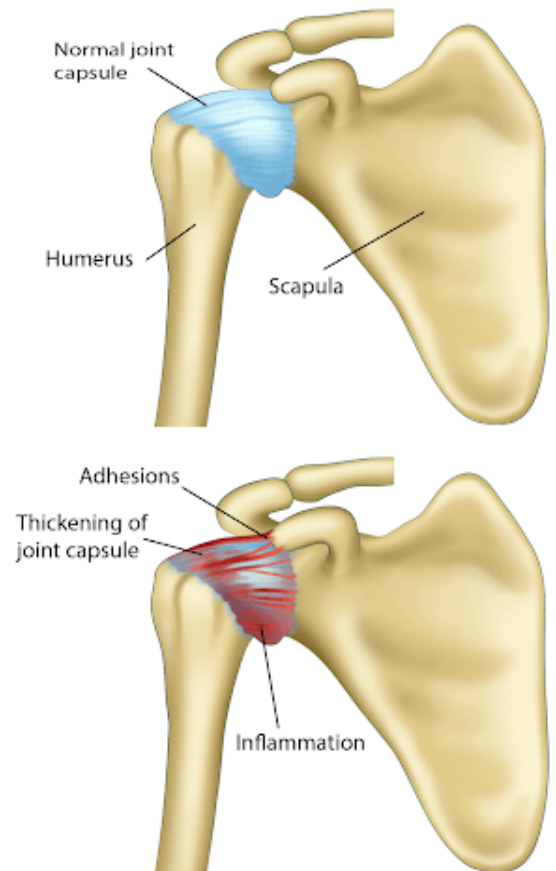
Treatment focuses on relieving symptoms and restoring range of motion. NSAID medications can help reduce pain. Targeted exercises can help stretch the joint capsule and restore movement. Steroid injections help reduce inflammation, improve pain, and break up adhesions. Surgery may be needed in severe cases.

How long is the recovery?

The condition is divided into 3 stages and can take up to three years to fully resolve:

1. Freezing stage (2 to 9 months): significant pain and worsening range of motion
2. Frozen stage (4 to 6 months): shoulder pain and restricted range of motion
3. Thawing stage (6 months to 2 years): slow resolution of pain and range of motion

Aggressive treatment with targeted exercises and steroid injections can help accelerate recovery. They also aid in decreasing pain and improving function.



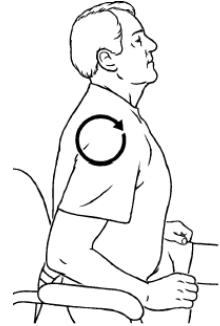
Frozen Shoulder Exercises

Consistently performing these targeted stretches and exercises can accelerate your recovery. This exercise regimen should be done up to 2-3 times per day.

Active Shoulder Warm Up

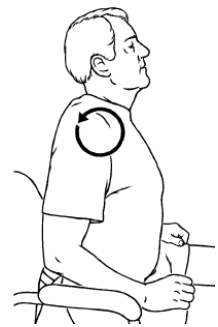
Shoulder Roll Forward

- Objective: improve shoulder mobility and relieve tension
- Keep your arms relaxed at your side. Lift your shoulders up towards your ears and then gently roll your shoulders forward making a circular motion. Continue the motion back down and then back to the starting position.
- Do this 10 times.



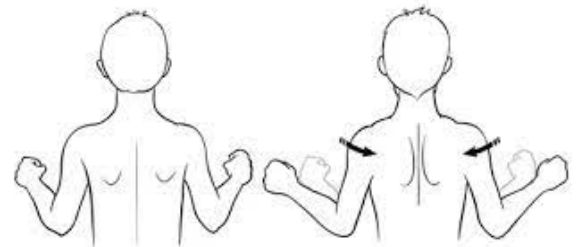
Shoulder Roll Backward

- Objective: improve shoulder mobility and relieve tension
- Keep your arms relaxed at your side. Lift your shoulders up towards your ears and then gently roll your shoulders backwards making a circular motion. Continue the motion back down and then back to the starting position.
- Do this 10 times.



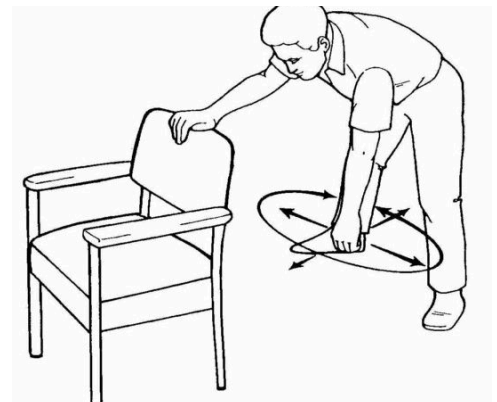
Scapular Squeezes

- Objective: strengthen scapular stabilizer muscles
- Start with your arms at your side. Pull your shoulder blades towards each other and squeeze for 1-2 seconds before returning to the starting position.
- Do this 10 times.



Pendulum Exercises

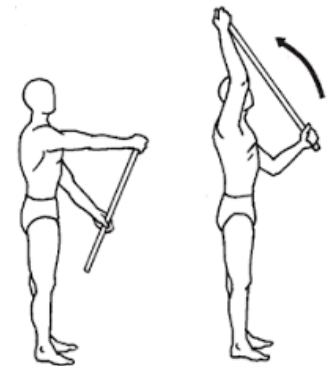
- Objective: mobilize the shoulder joint
- Lean forward and allow your arm to hang down. Sway your body in a circular motion, allowing your arm to swing in a small circle. Do this 10 times.
- Sway your body side to side, allowing your arm to swing left and right. Do this 10 times.
- Sway your body forward and backward, allowing your arm to swing front to back. Do this 10 times.



You will need a long stick (broom, PVC pipe, cane, golf club, rod, etc) that is sturdy and easy to grip. The length should be enough to comfortably hold with both hands.

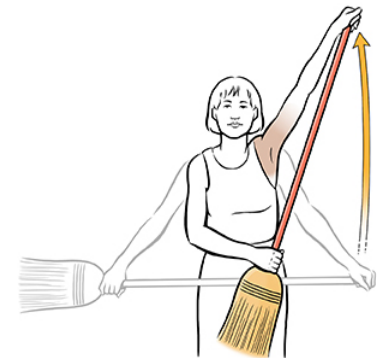
Shoulder Forward Flexion Stretch

- Objective: stretch adhesions to improve range of motion
- Hold the stick in front of you. The affected arm should be relaxed. Use the unaffected arm to push the stick straight forward in front of you, lifting your affected arm. Raise the stick as high as you can go. A pain level of 3 or 4 out of 10 is acceptable. Hold this position for 5 seconds and return to the starting position, then repeat.
- Perform for a total of 1 minute.



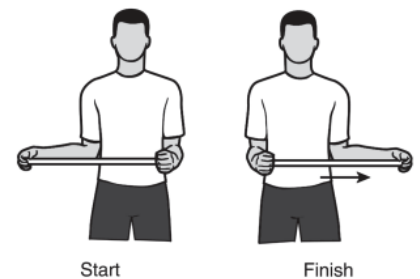
Shoulder Abduction Stretch

- Objective: stretch adhesions to improve range of motion
- Hold the stick in front of you with both hands. Use the unaffected arm to push the stick outward and to the side, causing the affected arm to move away from the body. Raise the stick as high as you can go. A pain level of 3 or 4 out of 10 is acceptable. Hold this position for 5 seconds and return to the starting position, then repeat.
- Perform for a total of 1 minute.



Shoulder External Rotation Stretch

- Objective: stretch adhesions to improve range of motion
- Hold the stick in front of you with both hands. Bend the elbow of the affected arm to 90 degrees. Push the stick with your other hand causing your affected hand and forearm to rotate outwards. Push as far as you can go. A pain level of 3 or 4 out of 10 is acceptable. Hold this position for 5 seconds and return to the starting position, then repeat.
- Perform for a total of 1 minute.



Shoulder Internal Rotation Stretch

- Objective: stretch adhesions to improve range of motion
- Hold a stick, towel, or belt in one hand behind your back. Grab onto it with the hand of your affected shoulder. Pull upwards with the top hand which will in turn lift the bottom hand higher up the back. Pull as far as you can go. A pain level of 3 or 4 out of 10 is acceptable. Hold this position for 5 seconds and return to the starting position, then repeat.
- Perform for a total of 1 minute.

