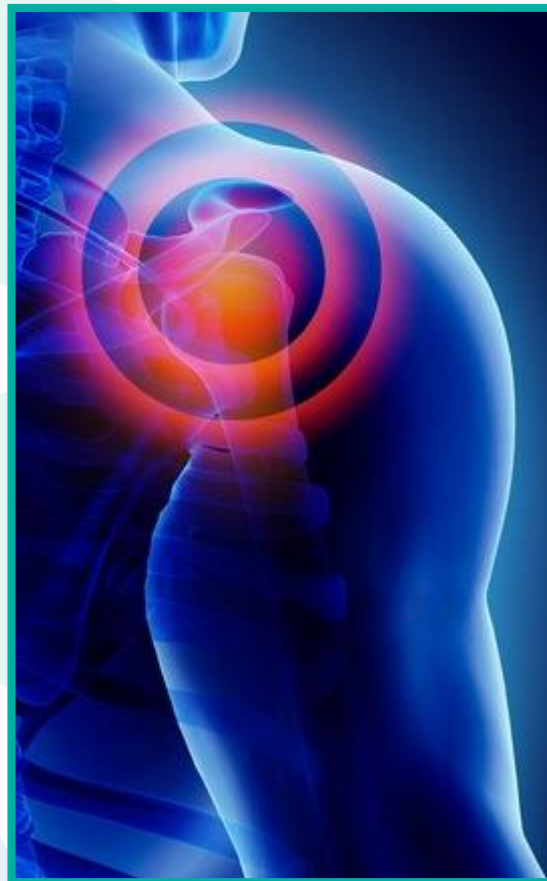


## Adhesive Capsulitis Information & exercise

# Frozen Shoulder

A Frozen shoulder, also known as adhesive capsulitis, usually causes pain and stiffness in your shoulder resulting in difficulty moving your arm. If nothing is done most frozen shoulders improve significantly over 2-4 years after onset. However, the pain and limitations of the stiff shoulder generally require treatment. The treatment required depends on the severity of symptoms.



## Causes

The shoulder is a ball and socket joint. The joint is surrounded with a loose fibrous capsule (or netting). During the development of a frozen shoulder the capsule can become inflamed and gradually thickens, scars and tightens over time. This can happen in either one or both shoulders.

About three out of 100 people will get a frozen shoulder at some point in their life. You're more likely to get a frozen shoulder if you're aged between 40 and 60, and it's slightly more common among women.

People with certain health conditions, such as diabetes (either type 1 or type 2), thyroid issues, lung disease, heart or neck problems, are more likely to develop the condition. If you have diabetes, a frozen shoulder may take a bit longer to get better.

On some occasions a Frozen Shoulder can occur following an injury, trauma or surgery where the capsule becomes inflamed and then gradually stiffens. However, it's often not clear why people get a frozen shoulder.

## Symptoms

There are two main symptoms of a frozen shoulder:

- Pain: Usually described as a constant toothache pain with a sharper pain occurring on certain arm movements.
- Stiffness: the shoulder will be stiff in some or all movements particularly reaching above and turning your arm away from your body.

### The Stages of a Frozen Shoulder

A frozen shoulder can go via 3 phases, but each can overlap:

1. **The Freezing Stage:** This is when the shoulder starts to become painful and movements slowly become restricted. Pain starts to become more painful at night. This can last from 2-9 months.
2. **The Frozen Stage:** The shoulder may become very stiff with limited arm movements. This phase can last up to a year.
3. **The Thawing Stage:** The condition starts to resolve. Pain continues to fade and shoulder movement starts to improve over several months or in some cases years.

## Management

Treatment options depend on the severity of your symptoms and what stage your conditions has reached.

Changes in lifestyle and modifying the known painful movements, can prevent the symptoms getting worse. You can have a significant impact on managing your own symptoms. Read the following advice for things you can do to help yourself.

### Exercise

Targeted shoulder exercises to encourage movement, flexibility and strength can help to improve your arm movement and pain. Try the exercises on the pages below, starting initially with stage 1, then progressing to stage 2 when pain allows.

### Lifestyle Adaptations

Some simple changes in how you perform your daily tasks may help;

- When getting dressed wear loose and front-fastening tops and put your affected arm into the armhole first.
- In bed at night you could use towels or pillows to support your arm, which will also help you stop rolling onto your frozen shoulder.
- When you're sitting, put a pillow or cushion behind your lower back so you don't lean forwards, which can make the pain worse. You can also support your affected arm on a cushion in your lap

## Pain Management

### Ice/Heat

Using Ice to cool or Heat to warm the painful area can be helpful in managing pain and help the healing process. The smaller the body area the less time you will need to keep the ice or heat on. Start with 5 minutes but no more than 15/20 minutes per body part.

Use a damp towel between yourself and ice to prevent any cold burns. Use a dry towel between yourself and the heat to prevent heat burns. Regularly check your skin while using ice or heat and remove immediately if any burns or injury occurs. Only use heat/ice if your skin sensation is normal.

Use Ice for Pain relief or **after** activity/exercise.

Use heat for pain relief or **before** activity/exercise.

## Pain Relief

Over the counter pain relief medication can be used to reduce your pain so you can be more active or complete your exercises.

All medications have side effects and must be used carefully. Paracetamol and ibuprofen are the most common over the counter pain killers. However, some medical conditions will prevent you from taking them so, you should always check with your GP or Pharmacist to ensure they are safe for you.

If you decide to take pain medication it is important to take them at the recommended dose and to take them regularly to prevent a flare up of your symptoms and allow you to remain active and continue exercising. Don't wait until your pain is severe before taking the pain killers as they won't work as well.

## Prognosis

Frozen shoulder can take at least 1.5 to 2 years to get better. Sometimes it can be up to 5 years but the pain and stiffness will usually go away eventually.

## Corticosteroid Injection

If your symptoms are severe, or not improving after trying the previous advice then you may be offered a corticosteroid injection. This can help to ease the pain, making physiotherapy more comfortable for you.

Some individuals may not be able to receive this treatment due to their current health or types of medicines they are taking.

## Hydrodilatation

This procedure involves stretching the capsule of the joint by injecting a mixture of sterile saline, local anaesthetic and steroid. This opens up the joint and releases sticky adhesions within the joint. The Radiologist performs the procedure in the Xray department using Xray guidance to ensure the injection is accurately placed. Normally you can experience significant improvement in shoulder movement and shoulder comfort within a few weeks of the procedure.

## Surgery

If all the self-help and non-surgical treatments fail to improve symptoms then an orthopaedic surgeon may suggest an arthroscopic release procedure. This is a type of key-hole procedure where the surgeon will cut through the tight parts of the capsule to loosen it.

Local shoulder surgeons note it has around 80-90% chance of significantly improving pain levels. Although movement improves most never regain all their movement or, can be left with some end range stiffness.

## Further Information

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/frozen-shoulder>

<https://www.shoulderdoc.co.uk/section/16>

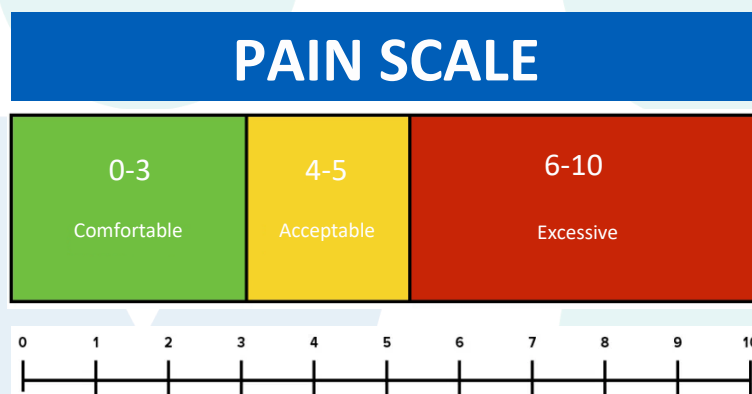
## Exercise

Pain during exercises should be manageable. Aim to stay within the green and amber zones. If experiencing excessive pain then you can modify the exercise, and then slowly build it back up over time;

- Reduce the range of movement
- Reduce repetitions
- Reduce the resistance/weight being used
- Slower, less intensity and control the movement more
- Increase the rest between each set of exercises

Progress onto the next stage of exercise once they become easier and you are able to fully complete the exercises in the comfortable zone of the pain scale.

- Pain after exercise should settle to your pre exercise levels within 30-60 minutes.
- Pain or stiffness the next morning should not last longer than 60 minutes.
- Use your pain relief, ice or heat to help ease your symptoms.





## **Frozen Shoulder Exercises Stage 1**



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### **Pendulum**

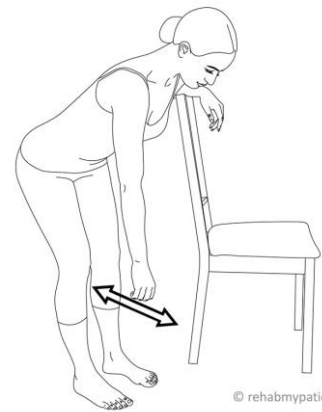
Lean over holding on to a chair or table, let your arm hang down by your side, and swing your arm gently in circles. Try to let momentum and gravity move your arm. Go anti-clockwise and clockwise. This exercise is a great way to passively mobilise a stiff shoulder. Repeat in the opposite direction

**Repeat 30 Seconds | Perform 3-4 times daily**

### **Pendulum 2**

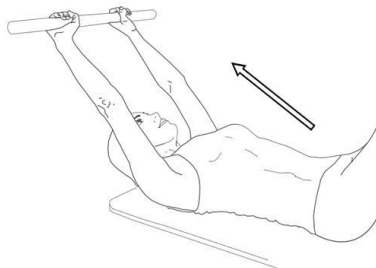
Lean over holding on to a chair or table, let your arm hang down by your side, and swing your arm gently from front to back. Try to let momentum and gravity move your arm. Go forwards and then backwards. This exercise is a great way to passively mobilise a stiff shoulder.

**Repeat 30 Seconds | Perform 3-4 times daily**



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### **Passive Flexion Arm Lift Lying Dowel Rod**



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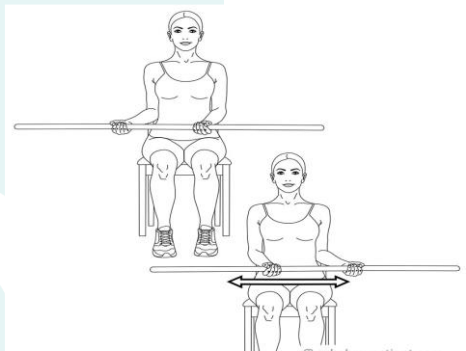
Use your good arm to lift the dowel rod or stick and hold on to the other end with your bad arm. Make sure your painful arm stays relaxed. Take your arm as high as feels comfortable. Stop when you feel pain, and slowly lower your arm. This exercise will help improve your shoulder mobility. If you don't have a dowel rod, you can use a broom stick or golf club.

**Repeat 10 times | Perform 3 times daily**

### **Rotation with a Dowel Rod Sitting**

Sit upright on a chair, holding a dowel rod, pole, golf club or broom stick. Keeping your elbows tucked into your side, gently rotate your arms moving the dowel rod to one side, and then the other side. This exercise will help to improve shoulder mobility.

**Repeat 10 times | Perform 3 times daily**



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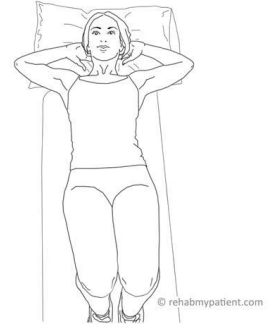


## Frozen Shoulder Exercises Stage 2

### Pec Stretch Supine

Lying flat on your back, place your hands behind your head. Try to gently drop your elbows towards the floor. You may feel a stretch in the front of the shoulder and the upper chest (pectoral) muscles.

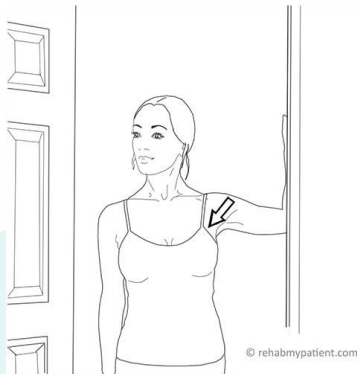
Hold 30 seconds | Perform 3 times daily



### Pec Stretch

Bend your elbow 90 degrees and rest your forearm against a door frame or wall, with your fingers pointing towards the ceiling. Lean forwards creating a stretch across your upper arm, front shoulder and slightly into your chest. This exercise stretches the pectoral muscle.

Hold 30 seconds x3 | Perform 3 times daily



### Mid-Deltoid Stretch

Place your arm across your chest, and resist pulling your arm away from your body. Your arm should not move. This exercise stretches the mid deltoid muscle located in the upper arm and shoulder.

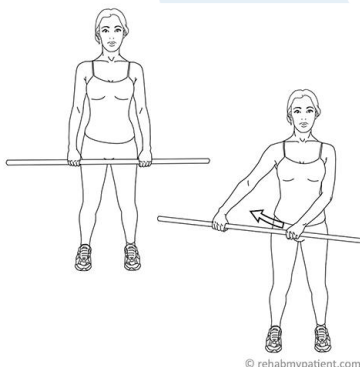
Hold 30 seconds x3 | Perform 3 times daily



### Passive Abduction with Dowel Rod

Hold a dowel rod in front of you and use your good arm to assist your painful arm in moving away from your body. Only go as far as feels comfortable, unless your therapist advises you otherwise. This exercise helps improve mobility of the shoulder. If you don't have a dowel rod, you can use a broom stick or golf club.

Repeat 10 times | Perform 3 times daily





## Frozen Shoulder Exercises Stage 2 continued

### Towel Dryer

Your good arm holds the towel above your head, and your sore arm relaxes behind your back. Lift your sore arm by pulling upwards with your good arm. You will feel a stretch/discomfort deep in your shoulder. Sometimes if your shoulder is sore, this exercise can be uncomfortable, but it does increase the mobility of your shoulder.

Hold 30 seconds x3 | Perform 3 times daily



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