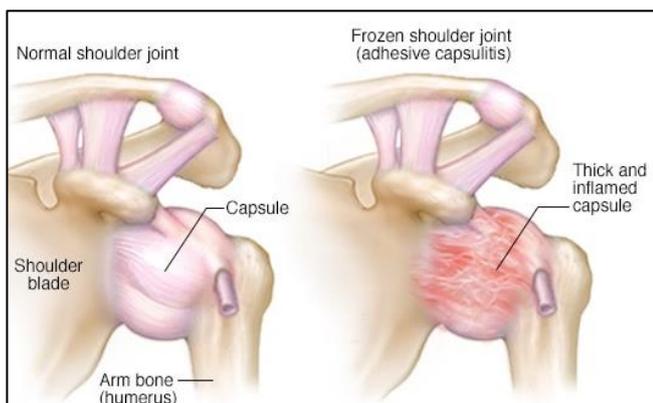


FROZEN SHOULDER

Frozen shoulder is a condition where the shoulder becomes very painful and stiff. It affects 1 in 50 adults at some stage in their life; most commonly affects non dominant shoulder. In some cases the condition develops in the other shoulder at some stage. It is not a form of arthritis. It is a self-limiting condition means it can get better without treatment in an average of 2 years, but in few people it could be several years. It is not very clear what causes the frozen shoulder but people with diabetes and previous shoulder injuries or surgeries are more likely to develop it. The shoulder becomes painful when the capsule around the shoulder become inflamed and shoulder becomes stiffer as the tissue becomes tighter and it shrinks.



Symptoms:

Typical symptoms of frozen shoulder are pain, stiffness and loss of movement of the affected shoulder. This condition typically has three stages:

Stage 1-Freezing stage: Is the most painful stage; people also start to feel stiffness and loss of mobility in this stage. Shoulder can be very painful at night affecting sleep. This can last from 2 to 9 months.

Stage 2-Frozen stage: Usually pain eases during this stage, but the stiffness remains the same so some of the activities like getting dressed can be painful. Reaching to over-head cupboard, scratching your back or putting your hand in rear pocket may become impossible. This stage can last for 4 to 6 months.

Stage 3-Thawing stage: Shoulder motion slowly starts to improve to normal or near normal and typically can take up to 2 years for the symptoms to settle.

Diagnosis and Treatment:

- By listening to your symptoms, history and by checking your shoulder movements, your doctor or physiotherapist will be able to diagnose frozen shoulder. Your GP or physiotherapist will refer you for further investigation if required.
- The symptoms generally get better by its own over the time, however simple treatment like pain medication and physiotherapy often helps to control pain and restore shoulder movements. Seek advice from your doctor or pharmacist for medication.
- To control pain you can also apply ice packs wrapped in towel or heat packs at your shoulder for 15-20 minutes 2-3 times a day.
- Therapeutic exercises are helpful to restore the movements and strengthen the shoulder.

Exercise considerations:

- Do all the exercises within pain free limits, stretch pain is common with exercises and that should ease off within 30 minutes-1 hour after having done the exercises
- Post exercise soreness is quite common and could be felt up to 48 hours after having done the exercise regime. This should get better as you continue with the regime over time
- If any exercise worsens your symptoms, stop that exercise and seek advice from your physiotherapist.