

Frozen Shoulder

What is a Frozen Shoulder?

Frozen shoulder is a condition in which the shoulder becomes painful and stiff. It commonly affects people in the 40 to 60 age group. The condition is more common in people who have diabetes.

What causes it?

The cause of Frozen Shoulder is not known. The condition can start without any obvious cause or following an injury to the shoulder. Long periods of shoulder immobilisation can also lead to a frozen shoulder. The condition progresses slowly and can take up to two years to resolve.

What are the signs and symptoms?

The condition can be divided into three stages:

During the first stage pain is the main feature. The pain can be confined to the shoulder joint or spread down the front or side of the arm.

Pain, stiffness and loss of movement are the main features during the second stage of the condition. The pain is worse at night making it difficult to lie on the affected side. These symptoms often interfere with everyday activities such as reaching into the back pocket.

During the final stage of the condition, shoulder pain and stiffness gradually eases and movement gradually returns to normal or near normal.

Treatment

Anti-inflammatory medication and pain-killers are commonly prescribed by your GP. Most people are referred to a physiotherapist for expert advice and exercises. If physiotherapy does not help, a steroid injection (s) can be given to reduce the inflammation and help with pain relief.

Below are some exercises that will help maintain the movement at the shoulder:

1.



Lie on your back. Clasp your hands together, keep the elbows straight. Lift your arms above your head using your good arm to help your painful arm until you feel a stretch.

Repeat 10 times.

2.



Stand. Hold a stick with your arms down in front of you. Lift your arms straight up using your good arm to assist the painful one until you feel a stretch.

Repeat 10 times

3.



Stand. Grasp the stick with the painful arm. Lift the stick sideways using the other arm to assist until you feel a stretch.

Repeat 10 times

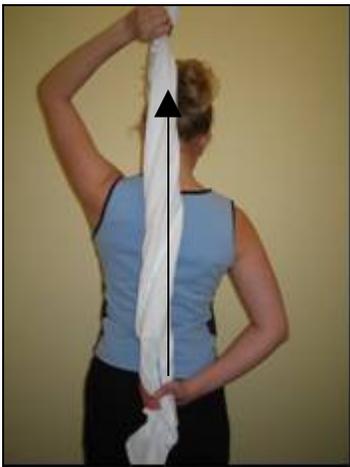
4.



Lie on your back or stand with your elbows tucked into your side. Hold the stick. Use your good arm to push your painful one out to the side until you feel a stretch, keep your elbows tucked in.

Repeat 10 times

5



Stand. Place a towel behind your back holding the bottom of the towel with your painful arm until you feel a stretch. Use your good arm to pull the towel upwards bringing your painful arm up behind the back.

Repeat 10 times

6



Lie on your back with your arms behind your head and elbows pointing towards the ceiling. Move elbows out and downwards towards the bed until you feel a stretch.

Repeat 10 times.

These exercises will feel uncomfortable at first but will get easier. Try to persevere but if the pain dramatically increases stop the exercises and consult your GP.

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Author: Patience Shava (Senior Physiotherapist)