

Frozen Shoulder

If you have limited range of movement in your shoulder with difficulty reaching behind your back, across your body and lifting your arm above your head, a frozen shoulder is the likely diagnosis. A frozen shoulder may be due to inflammation of the lining or the capsule around the joint and is most common in people between 45-65 years. The onset can be sudden or gradual and often cannot be linked to any injury. It tends to affect women more than men and 10% -20% of diabetics

There are generally 3 stages to a frozen shoulder

Stage One; Pain

The pain is continuous and may be worse at night. Moving the shoulder is very painful and severely restricted. To help the pain you may be prescribed painkillers by your GP or given a cortisone (steroid) injection. Resting the arm is advisable when the pain is severe. Use an ice pack (frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel) or a hot water bottle (filled with hot not boiling water) placed over the painful area for 15 minutes to help soothe the pain when severe. Normal activities within the pain free zone should be continued.

This stage can last 2-9 months

Stage Two; Stiffness

Over a period of time the pain reduces while the stiffness gradually increases with loss of movement. Eventually the pain goes but the shoulder remains stiff.

This stage can last 4-12 months

Stage 3; Resolution

The condition begins to resolve and the stiffness gradually reduces with improved movement regained over 12 - 42 months. At this stage exercises to facilitate the return of functional range of movement is encouraged.

Exercises

Exercises to improve movement are best done a little and often. They are shown on the following two pages. If any of these exercises aggravate the pain so you feel the problem is getting worse then cut down the number of exercises you are doing. If it



Stand holding stick behind your back with your elbows straight.

Lift the stick upwards away from your body.

Repeat 10 times.



Stand and grip one end of the stick with the arm to be exercised.

Lift the stick up and forwards or sideways by assisting with the other arm.

Repeat 10 times.



Stand or sit. Keep the upper arms close to the sides and elbows at right angles.

Turn forearms outwards.

Repeat 10 times.



Stand facing a wall.

'Walk' your fingers up the wall as high as possible. Reverse down in the same way.

Repeat 10 times.



Lying on your back with elbows straight.

Use one arm to lift the other arm up keeping it as close to the ear as possible.

Repeat 10 times.



Stand.

Lean forward and rest your good arm on a supporting surface. Let your affected arm hang down. Swing your arm in Circles, side to side and forwards and back. To progress, increase the size of the moments

Repeat 10 times.



Stand or sit.

Stretch one arm over the opposite shoulder by pushing it at the elbow with your other arm. Hold the stretching 20 seconds and relax.

Repeat 5 times.