

Frozen Shoulder

Adhesive capsulitis

WHAT TO EXPECT — AND IT IS A LONG ROAD

A frozen shoulder passes through three phases:

1. **Freezing (2-9 months)** — increasing pain, often worst at night, with movement gradually reducing.
2. **Frozen (4-12 months)** — pain settles but the shoulder is very stiff.
3. **Thawing (6-24 months)** — movement gradually returns.

The great majority recover, but it takes 1 to 3 years. Knowing this from the start is important — people who expect a quick cure give up on the exercises just when they matter most.

It is more common in **diabetics**, and in them it tends to last longer and be stiffer. Good sugar control helps.

Exercises — little and often

- **Do them 4 to 5 times a day, gently.** A few minutes each time is far better than one long painful session.
- **Warm the shoulder first** with a hot pack for 10 minutes — this makes stretching far more effective.
- **Pendulum:** lean forward supporting yourself on a table, let the arm hang loose, and swing it gently in small circles and side to side.
- **Wall walking:** face a wall, walk the fingers up as high as comfortable, hold, then walk down.
- **Towel stretch behind the back:** hold a towel with both hands and gently pull the affected arm upward.
- **Stick-assisted rotation:** lying on your back, use a stick in both hands to push the affected arm outwards.

GETTING THROUGH THE PAINFUL PHASE

Stretch to the point of **discomfort, not sharp pain**. Some ache during and shortly after is expected; pain lasting hours means you pushed too hard.

Sleep with a pillow supporting the arm, or lie on the good side hugging a pillow. Night pain is the most exhausting part — tell us, as it can be treated.

A **steroid injection** in the painful phase often helps considerably and makes the exercises possible. It is the exercises afterwards that restore the movement.

Do not stop moving the shoulder because it hurts. That is precisely how it becomes stiffer. Gentle, frequent, consistent movement is the treatment.

Search: frozen shoulder, adhesive capsulitis, shoulder stiffness, shoulder exercise

