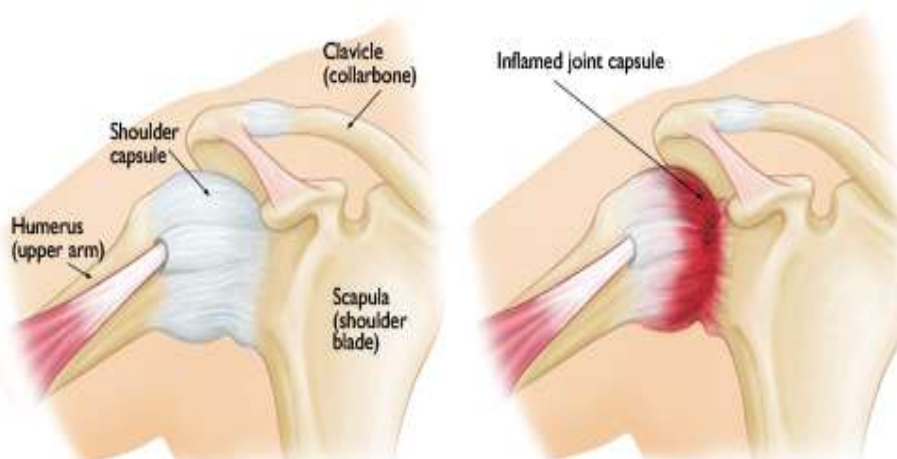


FROZEN (CONTRACTED) SHOULDER

WHAT IS IT? It is characterised by a slow, gradual progression of symptoms, from a very mobile shoulder joint, to one that finds movement in any direction difficult and painful. The joint capsule and ligaments become inflamed and thickened and then it starts to stick to itself. Adhesions gradual form which constrict/tighten over time. (See below)



WHAT CAUSES IT?

As yet it is unable to say exactly what causes this condition, but there are factors which may make you more susceptible:

- average age 50
- Diabetes
- over active thyroid
- recent trauma
- post shoulder surgery

HOW LONG DOES IT LAST FOR? The condition has to go through a period of freezing (stiffening) and pain (3-4 months), being frozen or Stiff (6-12 months) and thawing / loosening (6-12 months). The whole process can therefore last up to 28 months.

IS IT PAINFUL? The first stage will be the most painful, initially the pain being felt mostly at night. You may notice it during certain movements such as reaching up, reaching out to the side or putting your arm into a coat or back pocket. Gradually the pain will lessen during the frozen period and by thawing, pain will be almost non-existent.

WHAT CAN I DO? This is a condition which can be self managed.

- Heat pack. This can help soothe and relax the shoulder.
- Pain management it is advisable to discuss this with your GP and take as prescribed. In some cases an x-ray maybe considered – again to be discussed with your doctor.
- **Steroid injection.** This can be performed by your GP or by experienced physiotherapist at Derriford hospital. This can be very beneficial in the early more painful stage.
- Posture correction. Ensure you maintain good posture, not slouching or sitting slumped, as this will put extra strain on the muscles around your shoulder.
- **DO NOT** wear a sling.

EXERCISES

Gentle warm up exercises are important before you start to stretch more vigorously (see pendular exercises). The Exercises pictured below are all designed to stretch the shoulder joint. They should be held for 20 to 30 seconds if possible repeating 3 to 4 times. This should be repeated up to 4 times a day. These exercises should be slightly uncomfortable but not painful. You might expect an ache around the shoulder for a few minutes following exercises. But this is normal. These exercises are also available in video format on our youtube channel PLYMOUTHNHS PHYSIO. You can go directly to each video by following the below links.

Pendular exercises.

Spread your feet wider for balance then lean forward and let your sore shoulder hang down. Let it gently swing like a pendulum. Forwards and backwards, side to side and in circles.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zHbB_8nDAw



Active assisted shoulder flexion.

Lift sore shoulder up as high as you can, using good arm to help you push it slightly further. Can be performed in standing or lying.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J48T1xz03_w

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-VHGIGw2mM>



External rotation.

Using a stick. Hold this in both hands, palms upward and with both elbows bent at right angles (90 degrees). Use your good side to rotate your sore shoulder away from your body.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ae9ZZftDI5k>



Hand behind back/Internal rotation.

Lift hand up behind back as far as you can, using you good hand to help you.
This can also be done while holding a stick in both hands and using it to help.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ybg4TONddNw>



NB If you feel the exercises are causing undue discomfort please contact your Physio/GP for advice.

**This leaflet is available in larger print and other formats
please contact physiotherapy department on the address
below.**

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REF.....

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