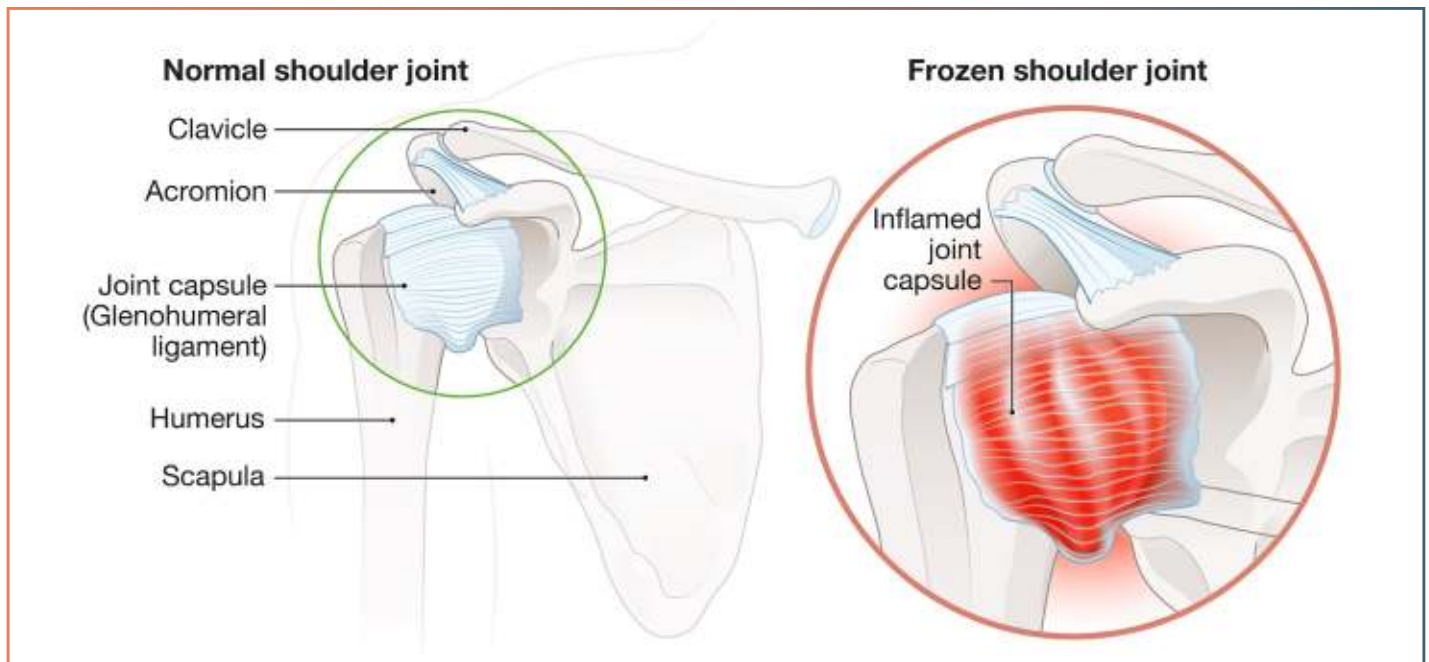


OVERVIEW

A frozen shoulder, or adhesive capsulitis, is a thickening and constriction of connective tissue surrounding the shoulder. It restricts movement and causes stiffness and pain in the shoulder joint.



CAUSES OF FROZEN SHOULDER

The cause is not fully understood but could have a hormonal or autoimmune component. It is more likely to occur after an extended immobilization of the shoulder after surgery or injury. It is also more likely in diabetic patients.

SYMPTOMS OF FROZEN SHOULDER

Symptoms have been described in three phases:

- Freezing: a dull pain around the outer shoulder. As the pain increases, the shoulder loses mobility. This phase can last from six weeks to nine months.
- Frozen: pain subsides but stiffness does not improve. The shoulder feels “locked” or “frozen.” This phase can last between four and nine months.
- Thawing: shoulder mobility returns to nearly normal range. The thawing stage usually lasts between five and twenty-six months before the cycle reoccurs.

TREATMENT FOR FROZEN SHOULDER

- May get better on its own.
- An over the counter anti-inflammatory such as ibuprofen can help relieve swelling.
- Local joint mobilization of the shoulder is essential to improving range of motion and reducing pain.
- Surgery is rarely indicated, but may be coupled with physical therapy if there is no relief from symptoms.

EXERCISE 1: Overhead Wand Stretch



Instructions:

Begin lying on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor, holding a dowel with your involved arm at the end.

Using your uninvolved arm to guide the movement, slowly move your other arm straight overhead. Return to the starting position, and repeat.

Make sure your involved arm is relaxed and keep your low back flat against the floor during the exercise.

EXERCISE 2: Rollover Sleeper Stretch



Instructions:

Begin by lying on your side with your bottom arm bent upward at a 90 degree angle.

With your other arm, apply a gentle downward pressure until you feel a stretch in your shoulder then roll over toward the arm gently feeling a stretch in the back of the shoulder/blade.

Make sure to roll slow and controlled. You can take up the roll first then the arm rotation for a different area of stretch.

Important:

The therapeutic exercises described on this page are for reference purposes only and may or may not apply directly to your condition. Only perform the exercises assigned by your physician. By using this information, you understand the potential risks connected with activity in any exercise, physical fitness or training program.