

Frozen Shoulder

What is Frozen Shoulder?

Frozen shoulder is one of the most common and painful shoulder conditions that affects mainly the middle-aged population.

People with this condition typically report diffused aching in the shoulder that can radiate to the elbow. This lingering pain can also impact your sleep quality.

Stiffness in the shoulder that progressively develops over time can affect your normal activities significantly, such as:

- Difficulties reaching behind your back
- Difficulties with overhead movements
- Difficulties putting on a T-shirt/ bra

There are similarities and differences between frozen shoulder and other competing shoulder pain which requires an experienced healthcare professional to make sense of your symptoms before referring you to further investigations and the necessary appropriate care.

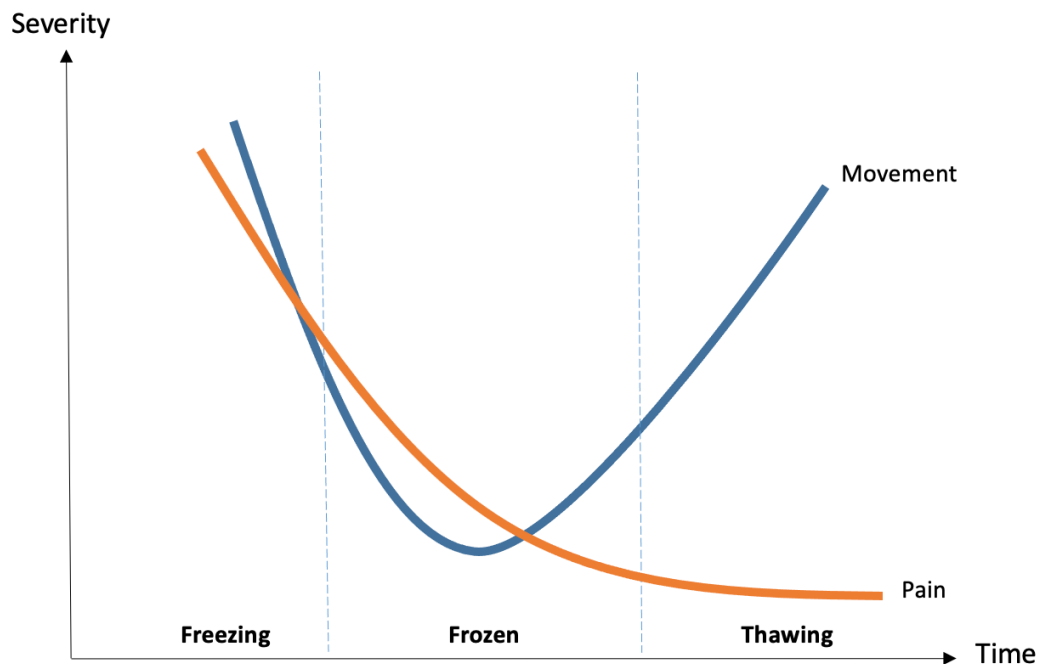
Read on to understand more about Frozen Shoulder.



Stages of Frozen Shoulder

It typically presents in 3 stages which last for an average of 2 years.

- **Stage 1:** Pain and freezing
- **Stage 2:** Frozen
- **Stage 3:** Thawing



How does Frozen shoulder develops?

Frozen shoulders are categorised as primary/idiopathic or secondary.

1. **Primary** frozen shoulder does not have any obvious cause. However, there are studies that suggest individuals suffering from diabetes are twice as likely to develop frozen shoulder and they also take a longer time to resolve.
2. **Secondary** frozen shoulder often occurs as a result of an injury or after surgery. This happens when the injured shoulder has not moved for an extended period of time. This results in insufficient shoulder movements in which stiffness may set in.

Risk factors for Frozen Shoulder

- Diabetes Mellitus (DM)
- Family history
- Hypothyroidism
- Recent shoulder injury/ surgery
- Previous stroke/ heart attack
- Age (typically above 50 years old)
- Gender (typically females more than males)

What can I do for myself?

- Pain > Stiffness: heat pack can be applied over the shoulder before commencing exercise to reduce pain. Exercises can be performed up to a tolerable level of discomfort.



- Stiffness > Pain: You may push the stretch as much as tolerated, the longer the better.



Why should I stretch and exercise?

Most individuals with frozen shoulders can regain pain-free full range of motion with regular stretching exercises.

Benefits of stretching for frozen shoulder include:

- Lesser pain after exercise
- Increased mobility of the shoulder
- Better outcomes in the long-term

Other than stretches, what else can I do to manage pain?

- Using a heat pack can often help you cope with pain.
- Depending on the stage of your Frozen Shoulder, your doctor may recommend a combination of these: injection, medication, physiotherapy and surgery.



Contributed by Physiotherapy, Rehabilitation, Allied Health Services

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