



MADE ~ TO *move*

Patient-centred. Performance-focused.

hello@madetomove.ca www.madetomove.ca @madetomove.ca

FROZEN SHOULDER

What is frozen shoulder?

The clinical term for frozen shoulder is adhesive capsulitis. This translates to inflammation of the capsule leading to adhesion or adhesive properties. An insidious onset leads to pain, stiffness, and restricted active and passive ranges of motion. Primary would be associated with Diabetes Mellitus, and having a thyroid condition or Parkinson's would increase the risk. Secondary would be after an injury leading to something like a rotator cuff tendinopathy, leading to frozen shoulder. There are typically three phases: freezing (the painful stage), frozen (the adhesive phase), and the thawing phase.

Freezing Phase (2-9 months)

-this phase has a gradual onset of pain, worsening at night

-gentle stretching and heat/ice can be used during this stage alongside patient education and potential medication

Frozen Phase (4-12 months)

-as pain decreases, range of motion decreases

-maintain stretching and heat/ice use, add isometric strengthening

Thawing Phase (5-26 months)

-range of motion gradually returns

-maintain stretching and add more resistance training

Do I need surgery? Do I need medication?

Potential use of medications like NSAIDs or glucocorticoids should be discussed with your family medical doctor and pharmacist. Referral to an orthopaedic surgeon after a trial of conservative care (typically 6-9 months) may also be discussed with your family doctor. In a study by JAMA, they found that glucocorticoid injections should be offered early during the phases (as it can last up to 6 months), and that electrotherapy, home exercise, and passive range of motion have added benefits.

Do I need an X-ray

Imaging is typically done when the patient is not responding to conservative care to investigate potential bony pathology or calcification in the tendons surrounding the shoulder (rotator cuff).

How aggressive should I stretch?

Stretches should be held for just 3-5 seconds at first and stay within each patient's comfort (or pain tolerance) zone.

What sort of exercises can I add during the frozen stage?

Exercises to maintain strength and add to the pushing of range of motion are to be added during this phase. Examples include, posterior capsule stretch, scapular retraction, external rotation (isometric).

How can I increase my rehab program during the thawing phase?

Slowly and gently push your range within tolerance, and hold your stretches for a longer period of time. This is the stage to push intensity of rehabilitation.