

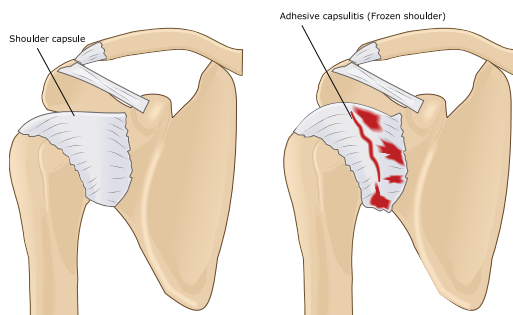
Frozen Shoulder

“Working with a knowledgeable hand therapist can make the difference between success and failure in complex hand surgical cases. The therapist extends the continuum of our care, as well as functioning as coach and trainer for our patients.”

Marybeth Ezaki, MD, Past President, American Society for Surgery of the Hand

What is frozen shoulder?

Frozen shoulder is the shortening, thickening and chronic inflammation of the soft tissue surrounding the shoulder joint, which can result in pain and loss of motion. It has been called adhesive capsulitis, and more recently, frozen shoulder contracture syndrome.



Front view of right shoulder

What causes frozen shoulder?

Frozen shoulder may be associated with an injury, such as a broken arm, and the inactivity of the arm following the injury. At times, a frozen shoulder may develop with no known cause.

What are the symptoms of frozen shoulder?

The symptoms of frozen shoulder are pain and loss of movement in the shoulder joint. Lifting, reaching and daily activities, such as putting on a shirt, may be difficult, and pain may be worse at night. There are three stages of frozen shoulder. The early stage when pain is greater than stiffness is known as the “freezing” stage. The stage when stiffness is greater than pain is known as the “frozen” stage. The “thawing” stage occurs when pain has decreased and shoulder range

of motion begins to improve. If left untreated, the pain and stiffness from a frozen shoulder may last several years.

What is the treatment for frozen shoulder?

The term frozen shoulder suggests that shoulder pain and stiffness will eventually “thaw” on its own without the need for therapy; however, with treatment, shoulder motion may return much faster.

Non-surgical treatment of a frozen shoulder can include therapy to help with motion and pain, medication to reduce inflammation and control pain or a cortisone injection. Surgical treatment is an option your physician may recommend if pain and motion do not improve.

What can a hand therapist do for me?

A hand therapist has specialized training to assist in reducing joint pain and improving shoulder motion and function. Each patient’s condition is unique, and will require a thorough evaluation to determine the best treatment approach. The physician, hand therapist and patient work together as a team in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for an individual with a frozen shoulder.



To locate a hand therapist in your area, visit the American Society of Hand Therapists at www.asht.org or call 856-380-6856.