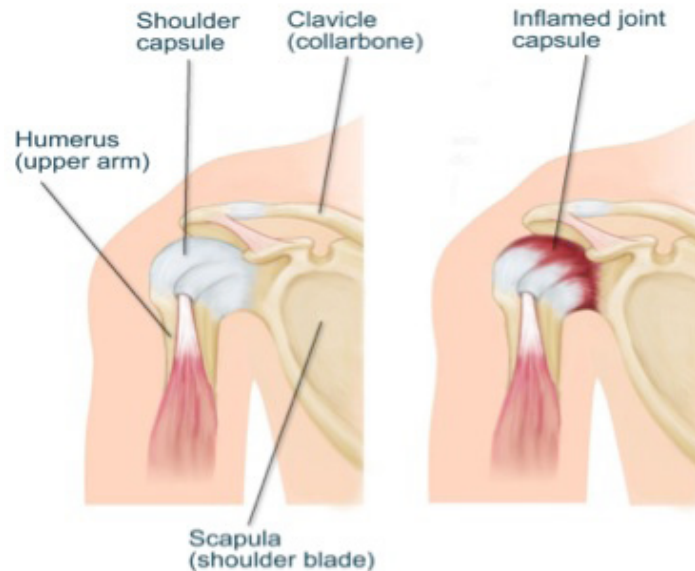


# FROZEN SHOULDER

Frozen shoulder, also known as adhesive capsulitis, is a condition that causes stiffness or limited motion of the shoulder as well as pain in the joint. Frozen shoulder typically begins gradually, worsens over time, and will then resolve within one to three years. This condition is more likely to occur in individuals between the ages of 30 to 65, in persons with diabetes, and tends to occur more frequently in women than men. Onset of frozen shoulder typically occurs after an injury to the shoulder or after prolonged immobilization in a sling.



## Signs & Symptoms

The bones, tendons, and ligaments of the shoulder joint are encased in a capsule of connective tissue. This capsule tightens and thickens around the shoulder joint, restricting the joint's movement. The typical stages of frozen shoulder are as follows:

- **Freezing Stage** - The shoulder's range of motion begins to become limited and pain increases with any movement of the shoulder. For some people, the pain worsens at night which disrupts sleep. This stage can last anywhere from 2 to 9 months.
- **Frozen Stage** - Pain may begin to diminish but the shoulder becomes stiffer causing the range of motion to be very limited. This stage can last anywhere from 4 to 12 months.
- **Thawing Stage** - The range of motion in the shoulder begins to improve over the next 12 to 42 months.

## Nonsurgical Treatment

- Heating and icing the shoulder
- Medication to reduce the inflammation and relieve pain
- A combination of physical therapy and a home exercise program to stretch and restore the motion of the shoulder
- Corticosteroid injections

## Surgery

In a small percentage of cases, arthroscopic surgery may be needed to successfully release the capsule and restore motion to the shoulder. This decision is typically made if the patient does not experience lessening of the stiffness after 12 to 18 months. After surgery, physical therapy is mandatory to maintain restored motion and normal shoulder function.

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