



Frozen Shoulder

The shoulder joint is a ball and socket joint. The ball part is the upper end of the arm bone, while the socket is part of the shoulder blade.

It is the most freely mobile joint in the body, allowing you to reach in any direction, from putting on your socks to combing the back of your head.

The term frozen shoulder describes a problem rather than a diagnosis. It is not a well understood problem, and may suddenly appear without any obvious cause. It is characterised by pain, resulting in loss of movement in all directions.

In medical terms, the condition is known as Adhesive Capsulitis, which literally means an inflamed, tightened shoulder capsule.

Quite often, a frozen shoulder can simply occur as a result of lack of movement in the shoulder itself. For example, if you have had your arm placed in a sling for any length of time.

At The Wye Physiotherapy practice we take care to check that the shoulder is kept moving, even when patients are suffering from other injuries such as a broken elbow or wrist.

There are usually three phases of a frozen shoulder:

Phase one -Pain: This early painful period can last up to 3 months. If we treat patients in this stage, we like to encourage lots of movement. We usually start off by getting patients to swing their arm loosely, plus we shown them how to lift their painful arm using the good one.

Your GP can also help by prescribing anti-inflammatories or suggesting a steroid injection in some cases.

Phase Two-Stiffness: The shoulder may be stiff for up to a year after initial onset.

Pain eases a little, but in order to avoid muscle weakness it important to follow a regime of easy exercises.

Phase Three-Recovery: This can last up to 2 years. (Don` t be downhearted, the end is in sight!).

You will notice a gradual increase in those tricky movements, like putting on a coat and reaching behind your back.

We can help to advise you on how to get back to all activities in the home, work and sports.