

# Information Sheet

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## Frozen shoulder

Technically known as **adhesive capsulitis**, a frozen shoulder is a painful inflammatory condition limiting shoulder mobility. It is caused by adhesions in the joint capsule which prevent smooth movement and cause pain. It can be caused by trauma, long term inactivity, complications from tension in the neck and shoulders or from overuse of the arm. Treatment works best if the shoulder can be treated in the *freezing* stage rather than the *frozen* stage.



**NB. This information does not replace a medical diagnosis but is intended as a guide. Always seek professional advice before beginning a program of self-help.**

Please note, this is intended as a guide to how you can help improve the symptoms of a frozen shoulder at home. Should you require any further or more specific advice, please do not hesitate to contact me.

## Self-help

- Rest from activities that caused the pain and avoid until fully healed
- Ice the painful area to reduce the inflammation
- Heat packs can be very soothing but use ice in the inflammatory stages. You can alternate between the two if that gets the best results.
- Speak to your doctor or pharmacy for advice about painkillers and anti-inflammatory medication
- Keep the shoulder girdle moving, avoid activities that make it worse, but it will continue to freeze if you try to limit movement too much
- Massage of the entire shoulder area will help ease the surrounding tissue to prevent causing extra pain and immobility. Trigger Point Massage can be particularly helpful.
- Movement should begin with passive movement, then active movement to stretch and finally resistive movement to strengthen - rushing this sequence will result in a tightening of the tissues and therefore a longer recovery. Consult your therapist for specific exercises.
- Keep good posture to prevent further pain and restriction