

Frozen Shoulder (Adhesive Capsulitis)

Diagnosis Explanation:

Frozen shoulder (adhesive capsulitis) is a **stiff and painful shoulder condition** caused by **inflammation and thickening of the joint capsule**. It typically develops in **three stages** over **several months to years**:

1. **Freezing Stage (Painful Phase, 2-9 months)** - Gradual increase in **shoulder pain** and **stiffness**, worse at night.
2. **Frozen Stage (Stiff Phase, 4-12 months)** - Pain may decrease, but **range of motion is severely limited**.
3. **Thawing Stage (Recovery Phase, 6 months-2 years)** - Gradual return of **mobility and strength**.

Specific Work Modifications:

- **If your job requires standing or walking:** Avoid **repetitive overhead reaching**, and take **breaks to stretch the shoulder gently**.
- **If your job involves lifting:** Avoid **lifting objects above shoulder height** or **sudden jerky movements**.
- **If your job is desk-based:** Keep the **shoulder supported**, adjust your **monitor to eye level**, and take **breaks every 30 minutes** to move the arm.
- **Avoid:** Repetitive overhead activities, prolonged immobilization, and sudden forceful movements.

Specific Activity Modifications:

- **If you play sports:** Avoid **throwing, swimming strokes, and overhead movements** until motion improves.
- **If you do weightlifting:** Avoid **overhead presses, pull-ups, dips, and heavy resistance exercises**.
- **If you do yoga or Pilates:** Modify poses to **avoid deep shoulder extension and weight-bearing on the arms**.
- **Avoid:** Overhead movements, sudden jerky arm motions, and excessive stretching that causes pain.

Recommended Supplements:

- **Collagen Peptides** - 10g daily for joint and tendon support.
- **Vitamin C** - 500mg daily to promote collagen synthesis.
- **Glucosamine & Chondroitin** - 1500mg/1200mg daily for joint health.
- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids** - 1000mg daily to reduce inflammation.
- **Turmeric (Curcumin)** - 500-1000mg daily for pain relief.

Recommended Nutrition and Hydration:

- **Increase Lean Protein** (chicken, fish, tofu, eggs) to support joint and muscle healing.
- **Eat Anti-Inflammatory Foods** (berries, leafy greens, turmeric, nuts) to reduce joint stiffness.
- **Consume Hydrating Foods** (cucumber, watermelon, citrus) to maintain tissue flexibility.
- **Limit Processed Foods & Sugars** to prevent inflammation.
- **Hydration:** Drink **8-10 cups of water daily** to keep the joints lubricated.

Home Exercise Prescription (Rehabilitation for Frozen Shoulder)

Early Phase (Freezing Stage, Reducing Pain & Improving Motion):

- **Pendulum Exercises** - Lean forward, let the arm hang, gently swing in small circles, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Wall Walk (Forward)** - Face a wall, use fingers to "walk" the arm up as high as comfortable, **hold 5 seconds, repeat 10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Cross-Body Stretch** - Use the opposite hand to pull the arm across the chest, **hold 20 seconds, 3x/day**.

Strengthening Phase (Frozen Stage, Restoring Function):

- **External Rotation with Resistance Band** - Keep elbow at **90 degrees**, rotate forearm outward, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Isometric Shoulder Holds** - Press palm against a wall without moving the shoulder, **hold 5 seconds, repeat 10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Wall Slides (Lateral Movement)** - Stand sideways to a wall, slide affected arm up and down, **10 reps, 2x/day**.

Advanced Phase (Thawing Stage, Preventing Recurrence):

- **Overhead Pulley Stretch** - Use a pulley or resistance band to gently assist arm overhead, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Light Resistance Shoulder Press** - Press arms upward without pain, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Scapular Stability Exercises (Resistance Band Rows)** - Pull resistance band toward chest, **10 reps, 2x/day**.

Helpful Books:

1. *Overcoming Frozen Shoulder: A Proven Step-by-Step Guide to Recovery* - Dr. Angela Moore.
2. *The Shoulder Pain Solution: Simple Exercises to Prevent and Recover from Injury* - John M. Kirsch, MD.

Click here for more orthopedic patient information.

Contact a Key West orthopedic clinic or reach out to Dr. Jason Pirozzolo.