



## HOW BOWEN THERAPY CAN HELP

# Frozen shoulder – like sharp shards piercing the shoulder



Frozen shoulder can be a very painful and disabling condition

The shoulder becomes increasingly stiff. Shoulder movement becomes restricted. Even simple movements such as fastening a bra or tucking a shirt into trousers become difficult or impossible. The pain can be constant. Concentrating on work can be difficult due to pain that doesn't subside. Pain often becomes severe at night when trying to sleep. Sleep deprivation is not uncommon. A light bump or certain moves can prompt tremendous pain.

Medically known as adhesive capsulitis, the shoulder capsule and connective tissues become stiff and thicken, resulting in greatly restricted shoulder movement.

Frozen shoulder is believed to impact about 3% of people. Those in their 50's and 60's are most often impacted, and it's not often seen in people under 40. It appears to be more common in females versus males.

There's no known cause. Occasionally it can start after some kind of local shoulder injury. Frequently, it just starts with no clear cause.

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The only good news is that frozen shoulder does not stay forever. It has a known progression and will resolve after some time. At least 90% of shoulder movement regained, and it's very unusual to reoccur in that shoulder. The bad news is that about 20% of people will develop frozen shoulder in their other shoulder at some time in the future.



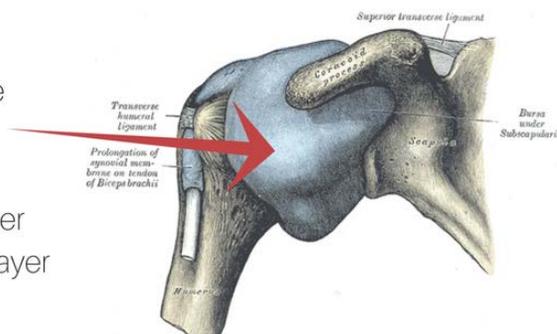
## Do you have frozen shoulder ?

There are three main hallmarks of frozen shoulder:

- shoulder stiffness that begins with no clear reason
- severe pain that's often worse at night or in cold weather
- near complete loss of movement of the shoulder – both active (try to move by self) and passive (moved by another with shoulder relaxed). This is seen most severely with external rotation of the shoulder.

A frozen shoulder will usually be diagnosed by a doctor or physiotherapist through physical examination. No special tests are needed. Xrays or MRI may be conducted to rule out other problems such as arthritic changes, or joint or rotator cuff injuries.

the shoulder capsule surrounds the shoulder joint with a fibrous outer layer and a cushioning inner layer



## Stages of frozen shoulder

Frozen shoulder usually develops slowly. There are three known stages, each with different symptoms.

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### Stage 1 = Freezing

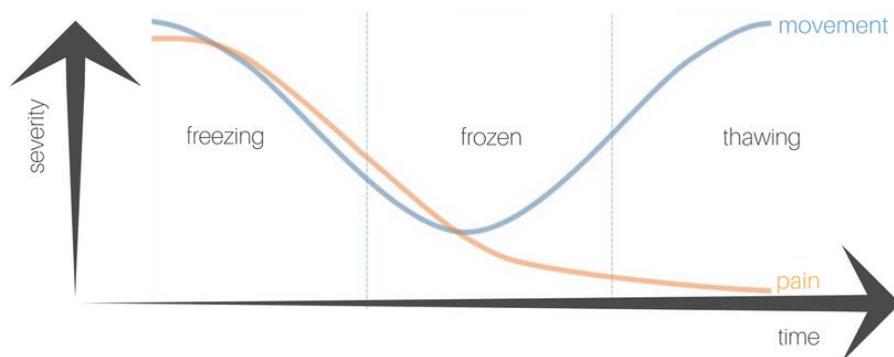
The shoulder becomes painful, followed by a progressive loss of movement. As the pain worsens, the shoulder loses movement. Loss of shoulder outward movement often occurs first, followed by loss in other directions. This is the most painful stage. It typically lasts 2-3 months, but can last 6 weeks to 9 months.

### Stage 2 = Frozen

During this time, a slow improvement in pain is usually seen. However, stiffness in the joint remains, with no further loss or improvement of motion. This stage usually lasts 4 to 9 months.

### Stage 3 = Thawing

Shoulder movement gradually returns. For many, the range of motion can return to normal, while some may remain mildly restricted. The shoulder may feel weak during this stage, due to lack of use of the shoulder over the past stages. This stage can last between 6-12months, but could take a couple of years to regain full motion.



## Treating frozen shoulder

The type of treatment that helps will depend on which stage the shoulder is experiencing.

In the freezing stage, pain relief is key. Medication is usually needed to manage the pain, although it should be noted that medication is unlikely to impact the freezing of the shoulder itself.

Stretching and mobilisation exercises are useful. However, the kind of exercises and stretches will differ depending on the stage. A physiotherapist is best to guide which exercises may be best for specific symptoms at each stage. Heat and other treatment (TENS, ultrasound)

may help loosen the shoulder joint and capsule.

Acupuncture may also be beneficial, helping to reduce pain in the freezing stage, and helping improve mobility in the thawing stage.

Manual therapies can be useful throughout. These help loosen the joints and regain range of movement. With lack of movement during the frozen stage, the body will likely compensate, with other parts of the body stiffening in response to being unable to move properly.



## **Bowen Therapy to help frozen shoulder**

Bowen Therapy has helped many people overcome their frozen shoulders.

A [study published in 2000 \(Kinneer\)](#) involved 100 people with frozen shoulder, treated with both Bowen Therapy and a placebo method. Those treated with Bowen Therapy experienced a significantly greater improvement in range of motion (23 degrees) versus those treated with a placebo treatment (8 degrees). Subjectively, pain levels also improved. Those participants who had initially received placebo treatment but later treated with Bowen Therapy found they then improved significantly.

A [further study published in 2001 \(Carter\)](#) of 20 people with frozen shoulder found that 70% of participants regained full mobility within 3-5 treatments (the remaining 30% found improved mobility). These participants had had a frozen shoulder between 1 month and >2 years, thus covering a number of stages of frozen shoulder. All participants experienced reduced pain intensity scores. With a starting average score of 7/10, 80% of participants reported scores of 0-2 after treatment (and 40% reported no pain).

Gentle moves to relax the body, together with specific moves for the shoulder itself, help the body to recover from frozen shoulder – much quicker than leaving the shoulder to run its course.

Most clients that I have worked with have found real improvement in pain and shoulder movement following a few Bowen Therapy treatments. While one found a significant improvement in a single treatment, for most 3-6 treatments have typically yielded great results.

I personally find that Bowen therapy is especially useful in that the whole body is impacted during treatment, not just the shoulder. People with frozen shoulder often find that not only is their shoulder restricted in movement, but other parts of the body too. To protect the shoulder from bumps and pain, the entire body moves and acts differently, resulting in restrictions in other locations. For some, those other restrictions may contribute to slowing the shoulder's recovery, as the body remains in compensatory patterns. Bowen Therapy can help bring balance back to the body as a whole, helping prevent other problems from emerging, while helping to resolve those already being seen.

Rather than wait for a frozen shoulder to take care of itself, why not try Bowen Therapy ? Safe, pain-free and very gentle... and very effective !

JANUARY 12, 2017 BY LISA

**TAGS:** FROZEN SHOULDER, PAIN, SHOULDERS

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