

## **Frozen Shoulder? Step-by-Step Exercise & Pain Relief Program for the “Freezing Stage”.**

While frozen shoulder (adhesive capsulitis) is minimally understood, what is known is that when you have it you typically experience three stages:

1. Freezing Stage: You begin to lose motion in the shoulder, and it becomes increasingly painful. This phase generally lasts 6 to 9 weeks.
2. Frozen Stage: The shoulder becomes less painful, but the stiffness remains. This phase can last 4 to 6 months. Unfortunately, activities of daily living can be exceedingly difficult to perform during this time.
3. Thawing Stage: During this phase, the shoulder begins to gradually improve and return to normal. Both strength and range of motion are often regained. This usually takes 6 months to 2 years to occur.

Each phase will be managed differently.

### *Freezing Stage:*

During the freezing stage you will want to manage your pain levels as best as possible. Your physician may recommend an anti-inflammatory or pain relief medication. They also may recommend that you receive an intra-articular corticosteroid injection. According to studies Intra-articular corticosteroid injections were effective in pain relief in the short term, but this pain relief did not continue into the long term. However, those that received an intra-articular corticosteroid injection had greater improvement in passive shoulder ROM both in the short and the long terms.

Ice and the use of a TENS unit can also help you control the pain levels. See our videos on the use of TENS under our program section at [BobandBrad.com](http://BobandBrad.com).

You will want to gently maintain movement during the freezing stage. We will demonstrate 3 different approaches:

1. Towel slides on table. Place towel on table and place arm on towel. Slide arm forward until pain or stretch is felt. Repeat 10X. The same exercise can be performed with an air-filled ball 12” or even a physio ball.



2. Pendulum: Place non-involved shoulder hand on table or countertop (or edge of chair). Use body to swing frozen shoulder forward and back, or side-to-side. 10X each direction. Should be relatively painless.



You can also use a broomstick or booyah stik. Place one end on the floor. Grab the other end of the stick with your arm level or below. Gently push the stick forward and back 10x. You can also go side to side 10x.

3. Reciprocal pulleys: Over the door pulley system. Start with short pulls to warm up the shoulder. Every 30 seconds or so perform a maximal pull to stretch the involved shoulder.



4. Also, you will want to perform the posture “W exercises”. Perform a chin tuck while putting your arms in the W position and squeezing your shoulder blades together. Repeat 10x.



5. Repeat with your arms in a T position 10x.



6. Repeat with your arms in a reverse Y position 10x.