

Frozen Shoulder

Description:

Frozen Shoulder, also called adhesive capsulitis, is a condition where inflammation occurs in the glenohumeral (shoulder) joint capsule causing limited range of motion (ROM) and a considerable amount of pain. The adhesions in the joint capsule causes contraction affecting flexion, abduction and rotation (YJ, 2017). Frozen Shoulder more commonly occurs in women age 40-60 years, which indicates hormonal changes could contribute to the condition. The cause can also be from immobilization from a recovering injury, illness or surgery. Also, with systemic issues such as diabetes, thyroid disease, heart disease, stroke and Parkinson, patients have a 10-20% increased risk of experiencing Frozen Shoulder (WebMed, n.d.). Symptoms can develop and last anywhere from several months to 2-3 years (Harvard, n.d.).

Typically, Frozen Shoulder has three stages:

1. Freezing Stage – Pain develops with movement and increases over time.
2. Frozen Stage – The pain lessens, but stiffness increases.
3. Thawing Stage – ROM improves and returns to normal.

Physical Therapy and following up with yoga are successful in treating Frozen Shoulder, beginning with passive ROM and stretching exercises. Afterwards, strengthening exercises will help protect the shoulder joint from future injury.

Symptoms:

- Pain, heat
- Stiffness
- Limited ROM

Benefits of Yoga	Precautions
It is recommended to warm up prior to exercises. A warm shower is best.	Stretch to the point of limitation, not pain. It is important to listen to the body!
Observe breath when stretching. If a client begins holding the breath, back down to a slightly less stretch, and have client breath into that stretch.	The typical Sun Salutations include the full Plank, Chattarunga, Updog and Downdog can be over taxing on students' shoulders who have not built up to the full version. It is recommended to stress the importance of modified versions, until

	students have built up enough strength to handle the full version. Even experienced students should revise their flow as their muscles exhaust during a Vinyasa flow.
Applying ice for 10-15 minutes at a time helps to relieve pain. Acupuncture and massage can also help with pain relief (YJ, 2017).	It is imperative as an instructor to stress the importance of a proper Chattarunga. Shoulders should NEVER go lower than the elbows in this pose.
Daily meditation will help relieve tension and promote healing. Meditating and visualizaiton w/ a healing mantra or verse and a hand placed on affected shoulder can help.	Mindfulness and proper alignment in practice is important to avoid shoulder injury, especially later in the practice as the muscles exhaust. Don't allow pride to cause injury by continuing to do the full versions of plank, chattarunga and updog when muscles are exhausted. Instructors should encourage students to modify the Vinyasa, and model modifications.
Positive attitude of healing can aid in healing.	Avoid over doing when shoulder begins to feel better.

Mini Flow:

- Lying on your back and arms at sides palms facing up, work on sliding arms up to the point of stretch, but not pain. Use the breath to breath into the stretch, and hold.
- Seated: Clasp a strap or towel behind the back using the unaffected arm to GENTLY stretch the side of the Frozen Shoulder.
- While seated, bring both arms out in front palms facing towards each other. Bend elbows, and use the unaffected arm to gently to hook under the affected arm to cross elbows into a modified eagle arm pose. Move slowly, and stop at any point of pain or breath holding. Back away from the place of pain, and hold pose using the breath to breath into the stretch.
- Stand in a Half-lift and allow arms to dangle in pendulum swings – swing in a circular motion, first one way, then the other.
- Flow between wall Downdog into wall Plank several times.
- Flow between Tabletop to Child's Pose w/arms resting on mat above head.
- Savasana

References:

Harvard Health (n.d.) "How to release a frozen shoulder", Harvard Women's Health Watch, Retrieved from: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/pain/how-to-release-a-frozen-shoulder>.

Webmed (n.d.) "What is a Frozen Shoulder?", Retrieved from: <https://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/what-is-a-frozen-shoulder#1>.

Gudmedstad, J. (Apr. 4, 2017), "Yoga Tips to Thaw a Frozen Shoulder", Yoga Journal,
Retrieved from: <https://www.yogajournal.com/teach/thawing-a-frozen-shoulder>.