REHABILITATION PROGRAMME

Frozen Shoulder Exercise Programme

For a painful, stiff shoulder (adhesive capsulitis)

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This programme is for patients with a frozen shoulder. It combines gentle stretches, to win back movement, with simple strengthening once the pain allows, so that you can use your arm normally again.

HOW OFTEN	HOLD	REPEAT	SUPERVISION
4 times a day	5 seconds at first	10 times	Physiotherapist

Understanding a frozen shoulder

In a frozen shoulder, the lining of the shoulder joint, called the capsule, becomes inflamed. It then thickens and tightens, so the shoulder becomes painful and stiff. Turning the arm outwards, and reaching up or behind your back, are usually the hardest movements.

The condition tends to pass through three overlapping phases: a painful phase, a stiff phase, and a recovery phase in which movement slowly returns. Each phase can last many months, and sometimes up to one to two years. Treatment, such as an injection or an operation, aims to shorten or alter this course.

Exercises cannot force a frozen shoulder to loosen, but done little and often they protect the movement you have, ease the stiffness, and help the shoulder recover more fully. While the shoulder is very painful, keep the stretches gentle, and do more as the pain settles.

Easing the pain

- A warm shower, or a hot pack (hot fomentation), before you exercise can make the shoulder more comfortable.
- A cold compress, such as an ice pack wrapped in a thin towel, can ease the pain.
- Painkillers, taken as advised by your doctor, can make it easier to keep up the exercises.
- When pain is holding you back, an injection into the shoulder can ease it and make the exercises possible. Ask at the clinic whether it would help you.

> **If pain is stopping you from exercising, or you are worried about your shoulder, contact the clinic on +91 99197 03477.**

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Start only when Dr Malik or your physiotherapist has told you to. If you have had an injection, hydrodilatation or an operation, follow the timing you were given.
- Keep your shoulder blades gently drawn back and down throughout every exercise.
- Some soreness during the exercises is normal, but they should never cause severe pain, or pain that lingers afterwards.
- Stop, and contact the clinic, if pain increases sharply or you feel unwell.
- This sheet does not replace individual advice. If it differs from what you were told in clinic, follow the advice you were given there.

Part 1: Stretches

Start with these. Move slowly and smoothly, and stretch only as far as is comfortable. Hold each stretch for 5 seconds at first, then gradually for longer as the pain allows. The number of repetitions is a guide: doing each exercise well, and with effort, matters more than the exact count.

01 Pendulum swings

Loosening the shoulder, letting the weight of the arm do the work.

1. Stand beside a table and lean forwards, resting your good hand on it for support.
2. Let the affected arm hang straight down, relaxed.
3. Gently swing it forwards and backwards, then in small circles, one way and then the other.

REPETITIONS	SESSIONS
10 each way	4 a day

02 Lifting both arms overhead

Recovering the reach above your head.

1. Lying on your back, hold your hands together and lift both arms up towards the ceiling.
2. Carry on over your head as far as is comfortable, letting the good arm do most of the work.
3. Lower them slowly.

REPETITIONS	SESSIONS
10 times	4 a day

03 Turning the arm outwards with a stick

Recovering the movement that a frozen shoulder loses most.

1. Lie on your back holding a stick, such as a walking stick or a broom handle, in both hands.
2. Keep the elbow of the affected arm bent and tucked in against your side.
3. Push the stick with your good arm, so that the affected hand moves outwards.
4. Return slowly to the start.

REPETITIONS	SESSIONS
10 times	4 a day

04 Hands behind your head

Stretching the front of the shoulder.

1. Lie on your back with your hands clasped behind your head, elbows pointing up.
2. Slowly let your elbows move out to the sides, towards the bed.
3. Hold, then slowly bring your elbows back up.

HOLD	REPETITIONS	SESSIONS
5 seconds at first	10 times	4 a day

05 Doorway stretch

Opening up the front of the shoulder.

1. Stand in a doorway and place your palm against the door frame, with your shoulder and elbow each bent to about a right angle.
2. If you cannot reach that height yet, place your hand as high as is comfortable.
3. Step slowly forwards through the doorway until you feel a stretch across the front of the shoulder.
4. Hold, then step back.

HOLD	REPETITIONS	SESSIONS
5 seconds at first	10 times	4 a day

06 Across the chest

Stretching the back of the shoulder.

1. Standing, or sitting up straight, use your good hand to bring the affected arm across the front of your chest.
2. Gently press it towards the opposite shoulder until you feel a stretch.
3. Hold, then relax.

HOLD	REPETITIONS	SESSIONS
5 seconds at first	10 times	4 a day

Part 2: Strengthening

Add these once the painful phase has settled, when your physiotherapist advises, or when the Part 1 exercises have become too easy. Keep your elbow tucked in, and your shoulder blades back and down.

07 Pushing against your other hand

Strengthening the muscles around the shoulder without moving the joint.

1. Stand with the affected elbow bent to a right angle and tucked in at your side.
2. Hold the wrist of the affected arm with your good hand.
3. Try to turn the hand inwards, towards your stomach, while your good hand stops it moving. Hold, then relax.
4. Then try to turn it outwards, again without letting it move. Hold, then relax.

HOLD	REPETITIONS	SESSIONS
5 seconds	10 each way	4 a day

08 Pushing against a wall

Strengthening the shoulder without moving the joint.

1. Stand side-on to a wall, with the affected arm next to it.
2. Push the arm outwards into the wall, without letting it move. Hold, then relax.
3. Then stand with your back to the wall, your arm by your side and the elbow bent.
4. Push the elbow back into the wall. Hold, then relax.

HOLD	REPETITIONS	SESSIONS
5 seconds	10 of each	4 a day

09 Lifting the forearm, lying on your side

Strengthening the muscles that turn the arm outwards.

1. Lie on your good side. Bend the elbow of the affected arm to a right angle and keep it tucked in against your side.
2. Lift your forearm up towards the ceiling, keeping the elbow in place.
3. Do not roll backwards as you lift. Lower slowly.

REPETITIONS	SESSIONS
10 times	4 a day

10 Elastic band, out and in

Strengthening against gentle resistance.

1. Tie an elastic exercise band firmly to a banister, a railing or a door handle, at about elbow height.
2. Stand with your elbow tucked in against your side and your shoulder blades back and down.
3. Slowly pull the band outwards, away from your body. Hold, then let it back very slowly.
4. Turn round, so that the band pulls from the other side, and slowly pull it in towards your stomach. Hold, then let it back very slowly.

HOLD	REPETITIONS	SESSIONS
5 seconds	10 each way	4 a day

What to expect

A frozen shoulder recovers slowly, over months rather than weeks. Keep going even when progress feels slow: the exercises help you keep, and build on, every gain.

Short sessions four times a day work far better than one long session.

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