

Do you have Shoulder Pain????



THE SHOULDER JOINT

The Shoulder joint has the greatest mobility of all joints. But it has to rely on adjoining ligaments and muscles to provide stability. Consequently, they are susceptible to injury and degeneration. After low back pain and neck pain it ranks as third most prevalent musculoskeletal complaint.

The shoulder joint is also surrounded by a large capsule, in which the ligaments, bursas and the tendons are encapsulated.

Some of the common problems seen in shoulder pain are :-

- Frozen shoulder / Adhesive Capsulitis.
- Rotator cuff tear.
- Tendonitis.
- Bursitis.

A thorough diagnosis is required for the underlying cause of pain in shoulder joint. Apart from Physical assessment, sometimes X-rays and MRI Scans or Sonography might be required to come to a conclusion in diagnosis.

Frozen Shoulder also known as Adhesive Capsulitis

Symptoms of Frozen Shoulder

The painful shoulder condition is characterized by the following signs and symptoms:

- Dull ache which increases over time to sharp pain.
- Pain located over the outer shoulder area and into the upper arm.
- Difficulty rotating and elevating the arm, which is typically stiff and inflamed.
- Difficulty reaching behind the back.
- Pain when stress is put on the shoulder joint, i.e. reaching, lifting, carrying, pulling, lying on the affected shoulder.
- Pain often worse at night and in the cold (trouble sleeping).
- Typically affects only one side but may develop in both shoulders.

Frozen Shoulder Stages

Frozen shoulder is characterized by the following three stages or phases :

1. **Freezing Stage:** Shoulder gradually becomes stiff as pain worsens, culminating in a loss of range of motion or ‘freezing’ of the shoulder. Typically lasts 6 weeks to 9 months.
2. **Frozen Stage:** 4-6 month phase during which daily activities and arm movements are severely restricted; stiffness remains; pain gradually decreases.
3. **Thawing Stage:** Over a period of 6 months to 2-3 years, the condition gradually improves as the shoulder loosens up or “thaws,” returning to normal or near-normal strength and mobility.

The good news is that over 90% of individuals suffering from frozen shoulder, improve and restore motion without surgery and with Physiotherapy. Similarly, long-term outcomes for frozen shoulder surgery are very good.

Rotator Cuff Tear

A rotator cuff is a tear to any of the four rotator cuff muscles in the shoulder and is common in throwing and racket sports. They are so called because their job is to rotate the arm at the shoulder and provide a supportive cuff around the joint.

Role of Physiotherapy in treating Shoulder Pain

Modalities required :

There are various electrical modalities used to decrease pain, swelling and stiffness in the affected shoulder joint. The modalities generally used are Ultrasound therapy, Interferential Therapy (IFT), Ice or Cold packs, Hot packs.

Apart from the electrical interventions, Exercise Therapy is one of the most important treatment approach used for the shoulder joint.

- Stretching exercises – to improve flexibility of tight structures.
- Strengthening – to improve the strength of weak structures and regain normal function and Biomechanics.
- Joint Mobilization – It is one of the maneuverial techniques where a Physiotherapist applies different grades of movements to the affected shoulder. Joint mobilization helps reduce the stiffness in the shoulder.