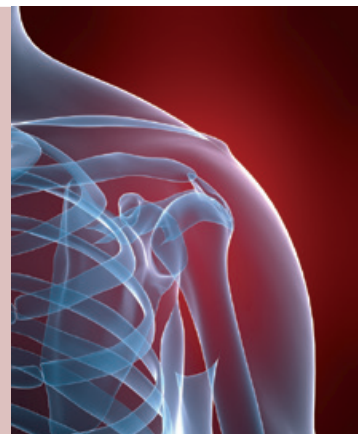


# Frozen Shoulder (Adhesive Capsulitis)

Frozen shoulder is a condition where a shoulder becomes very painful and stiff. Movement of the shoulder becomes reduced, sometimes completely 'frozen'. Without treatment, condition may be progressive and it may take 2-3 years for recovery. Various treatments are available to ease the pain, improve shoulder movement and shorten the recovery time.



## Common causes of frozen shoulder

Frozen shoulder is thought to be due to scar-like tissue forming in the shoulder capsule. The exact cause is not known. It is more common in people with diabetes and thyroid problems. Minor strain of, or injury to, the shoulder is thought to be the predisposing factors of frozen shoulder.

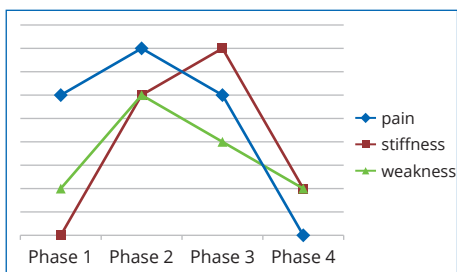
## Diagnosis

The diagnosis is usually confirmed by clinical assessment and a detailed physical examination. X-ray is usually not necessary but MRI or ultrasound may give a detailed view of the shoulder structures to help decide the treatment plan.

## Signs and symptoms

Typical symptoms are pain, stiffness and limitation in the range of movement of the shoulder. The symptoms typically have four phases:

- **Phase 1** - the painful phase. Pain is the major symptom. Range of movement of the shoulder is not affected.
- **Phase 2** - the 'freezing', painful phase. This typically lasts 2-9 months. Stiffness and limitation in movement gradually build up and there is an increase of pain. The pain is typically worse at night, and when lying on the affected side. Daily activities become gradually affected.
- **Phase 3** - the 'frozen', stiff phase. This typically lasts 4-12 months. Pain gradually eases but stiffness and limitation in movement remain and can get worse. All movements of the shoulder are affected but the movement most severely affected is usually rotation of the arm outwards or inwards (like scratching the back). The contour of the shoulder may be altered due to muscle weakness.



- **Phase 4** - the 'thawing' recovery phase. This typically lasts 5-24 months. The stiffness gradually goes and movement gradually returns to normal or near to 80% normal.

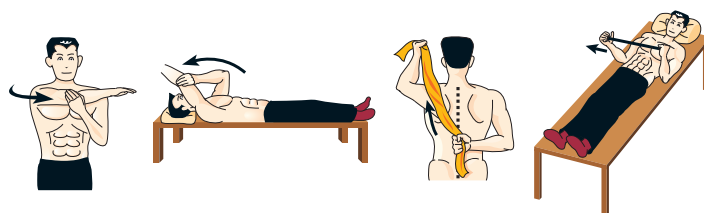
Symptoms often interfere with everyday tasks such as driving, dressing and sleeping. Even scratching the back or putting a hand in the rear pocket may become impossible. Work may be affected as well.

## Treatment options

### Conservative Treatment

During the painful phase the emphasis is on pain relief. Anti-inflammatory medication may be prescribed by the doctor or a steroid injection may be given if the pain is not controlled. Pain relieving treatment such as electrotherapy and acupuncture can be offered by the physiotherapist. Forcing the shoulder to move can make it more painful and therefore it is not advisable in the early stage.

When the stiffness becomes more evident than pain, physiotherapy including manual therapy and specific exercises will be crucial in improving the range of motion and strength of the shoulder.



Although complete resolution of frozen shoulder can take up to 2 years, physiotherapy helps in minimising pain and disability, accelerating the healing process.

Over 90% of frozen shoulders can be treated effectively by non-operative treatment.

### Other Treatment Options

If there is pain and stiffness causing significant incapacity, or prolonged stiffness, or when there is underlying trauma to the shoulder, the doctor may suggest shoulder injection, manipulation under anaesthesia or arthroscopic surgery. Intensive physiotherapy treatment is also necessary after these procedures for achieving a good recovery.

Compiled by:  
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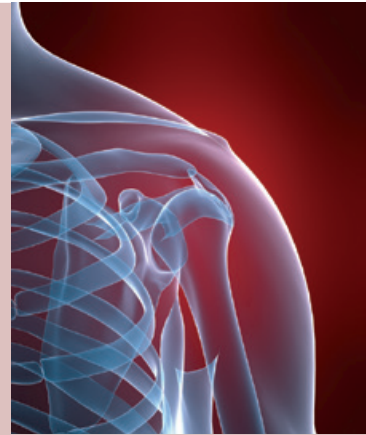
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To make a physiotherapy appointment,  
please call 2849 0760 or email [physio@matilda.org](mailto:physio@matilda.org).

Scan the QR code to obtain  
information of our medical  
centre or clinic downtown



# 黏連性肩關節囊炎(凝肩炎)



黏連性肩關節囊炎（凝肩炎）患者的肩膀會十分痛楚和僵硬，肩膀活動受到限制，有時更會完全僵硬。患者若不作治療，症狀會加劇，可能會持續2至3年。然而患者可透過不同療法以紓緩痛楚、改善肩膀活動和縮短復原時間。

## 凝肩炎的常見成因

凝肩炎相信是由肩囊內傷痕狀的組織引起，但其成因依然未有定論，但較常見於糖尿病患者或有甲狀腺問題的人士。另外，肩膀輕微過勞、受損也可能是凝肩炎的成因。

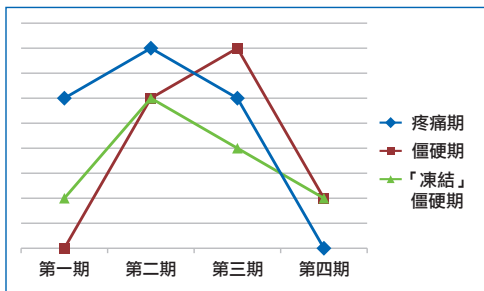
## 診斷方法

主要按臨床評估和詳細的體格檢查來診斷，通常病人毋須作X光診斷，但磁力共振或超聲波檢查可透視肩膀結構，幫助決定治療方法。

## 症狀

典型症狀包括肩部疼痛、僵硬和肩膀活動受到限制。症狀一般分為4個階段：

- **第一階段** - 疼痛期。痛楚為主要症狀，但肩膀活動的幅度不受影響。
- **第二階段** - 「冷凍」疼痛期，通常可長約2至9個月，肩膀逐漸僵硬、活動也逐漸受到限制，而痛楚也會加劇，尤其在晚上及受影響肩膀一方受壓時更甚。日常生活會逐漸受到影響。
- **第三階段** - 「凍結」僵硬期，通常維持約4至12個月，痛楚會慢慢減輕，但肩膀僵硬和活動受限的情況持續或可能惡化。所有肩膀活動皆受影響，但受影響最嚴重的動作是手臂向外或內轉(有如伸到背部搔癢的動作)。由於肌肉無力，肩膀外型或會改變。



- **第四階段** - 「解凍」復原期，通常維持約5至24個月，僵硬的情況會逐漸減退，活動也慢慢回復正常或康復至八成。

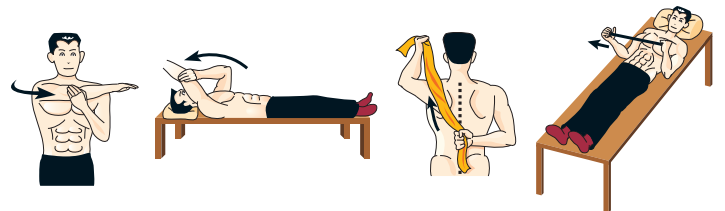
日常生活會經常受症狀影響，如駕駛、穿衣和睡覺等，也無法搔背或把手伸到後袋裡去，工作也可能受影響。

## 治療方法

### 保守療法

疼痛期間，治療重點在於減輕痛楚。醫生可能會處方消炎藥物，如痛楚不受控，更可能需要注射類固醇。物理治療師可提供紓緩痛楚的治療，如電療和針灸。不要強行活動肩膀，這只會令痛楚加劇，所以不建議早期強行活動肩膀。

當僵硬的程度比痛楚更顯著時，物理治療師會用徒手治療及教導特定的運動，以改善動作的幅度和肩膀的力量。



雖然要完全治癒凝肩炎需時2年，但物理治療可幫助患者減輕痛楚、生活上的不便和加快痊癒。

超過九成的凝肩炎可透過非手術治療治癒。

### 其他治療選擇

若痛楚及肩膀僵硬的情況令活動大大受阻、肩膀長期感到僵硬、又或肩部有潛在的創傷，醫生或會建議藥物注射、麻醉下進行徒手矯正或內窺鏡手術，然後再接受密集式的物理治療、幫助復康。

撰寫：  
明德國際醫院物理治療部

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請致電2849 0760或電郵physio@matilda.org。

掃描以下QR Code，  
查閱醫院位於市區的  
醫療中心或診所資料

