

# **FROZEN SHOULDER**

By Dr. Boyd Williams  
Certified Chiropractic Sports Physician

Shoulder stiffness can be muscular in origin or the result of some stressful activity or trauma. In serious cases of shoulder injury, use of the shoulder may be limited for extended periods of time, resulting in a loss of motion and/or painful movement. Shoulder dislocations, shoulder fractures, even rotator cuff tears whether acute or chronic in nature, can develop complications of adhesions in the joint leading to a condition called “Frozen Shoulder”.

The so-called frozen shoulder, begins after injury or mis-use causes the inner capsule of the shoulder joint to progressively tighten. Primarily this injury is seen in middle-aged athletes who hurt the shoulder and after which become sedentary because of pain or stiffness. All active movements of the shoulder become painful until eventually it becomes weak and favored by the individual.

The best treatment for frozen shoulder is to prevent it by properly treating the original injury and controlling inflammation. Once joint motion becomes chronically impaired, treatment must be directed at returning motion gradually. The use of a home pulley system (or a towel over the shower curtain rod) is useful to gently work the arm up and down as is walking up and down the wall with the fingers to slowly stretch the tight shoulder muscles. Massage therapy, ultrasound therapy and shoulder joint mobilization are helpful in breaking up adhesions. Professional care should also be sought to evaluate associated joints, including the ribs, sternum and spine, which have a direct influence on the shoulders biomechanical and muscular function. As motion is gradually restored, more complete stretching will become possible along with incorporation of exercises to rehabilitate the shoulder girdle muscles: swimming being an excellent activity. Once full movement is restored, light weight lifting is indicated, with, finally a return to athletic activity. The athlete must keep in mind that recovery depends on the degree of adhesion present with recovery process possibly taking several months.

For more information on this or other health topics, including information about our services, go to [www.creatingfamilywellness.com](http://www.creatingfamilywellness.com) or call us at 507-281-4878.