

PAIN & INJURY GUIDE

Frozen shoulder: your 5-minute routine

Gentle movements and stretches of the kind used to keep a stiff, painful shoulder moving.



Scan for the full guide

How often: Once or twice a day, up to three or four times a day if it feels good.

Total time: about 5 minutes. **You will need:** a sturdy chair, a table, a stick or broom handle, a firm, comfortable surface to lie on (a bed or mat).

Before you start

- This is general information based on NHS physiotherapy leaflets. It is not a personal treatment plan. If a doctor, physiotherapist or osteopath has given you different advice, follow that.
- Move slowly and smoothly. Mild discomfort or a stretching feeling is fine. Sharp pain is not.
- The pain should settle back to your usual level within an hour or two. If it is worse the next day, do fewer repeats or a smaller movement, or leave that exercise out for a few days.

Your routine

1

Pendulum swings

about 1 min

Lean forward, supporting yourself with your good arm on a table or chair. Let the sore arm hang loosely.
Gently swing it forwards and back, side to side, and in small circles each way.

How much: 10 to 20 of each movement

2

Stick push outwards

about 1 min

Sit holding a stick or broom handle with your sore elbow tucked into your side.
Use your good arm to push the stick so the sore hand moves out to the side. Do not let your body twist to help.

How much: 10 to 20 slow repeats

3

Lying arm raise

about 1 min

Lie on your back and hold the wrist of your sore arm with your other hand.
Lift it up and overhead as far as is comfortable without arching your back, then lower.

How much: 10 to 20 slow repeats

4

Back-of-shoulder stretch

about 2 min

Take the sore arm across your chest towards the opposite shoulder.
Use your other hand to gently pull at the elbow until you feel a stretch.

How much: Hold 20 seconds, 3 times

Good to know

- Some stretching or discomfort is normal. The pain should be acceptable to you, and not stay worse for long afterwards.

Easier, or harder?

- Too sore? Do fewer repeats, make the movement smaller, or miss that exercise out for a few days.
- Feeling good? Only add a few repeats, or a second set, when the routine feels easy and comfortable. There is no rush.

Keep track

Tick a box each day you do your routine.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Week 1							
Week 2							
Week 3							
Week 4							

Get urgent help first, and do not exercise, if you have any of these

Call 999 straight away if shoulder or arm pain comes with any of these. Shoulder pain can sometimes be referred from the heart.

- Chest pain or pressure, breathlessness, sweating or feeling faint, particularly with pain spreading into the left arm, neck or jaw
- A shoulder that looks out of place or deformed after an injury
- Sudden loss of the ability to lift your arm after a fall

See your GP promptly, or call NHS 111, if

- Pain after a fall or significant injury
- A hot, red, swollen shoulder, especially with a fever
- Unexplained weight loss or constant night pain unrelated to position

Stop these exercises if

- If the pain is increasing, reduce how often or how hard you do the exercises, and see a physiotherapist or doctor.
- If you are not improving after about 4 weeks, or things are getting worse sooner, get it checked. A GP, physiotherapist or osteopath can assess what is going on and adjust your exercises.

Want your problem assessed?

If you would like your symptoms assessed, you are welcome to book an appointment with Lance Peterson Osteopathy in Chichester: lancepetersonosteopathy.co.uk/book.html · 07899 358698. Osteopathic care is not right for everyone, and if something needs medical attention first, you will be told.

The full plain-English guide, with the common questions and sources, is at:
lancepetersonosteopathy.co.uk/guide/frozen-shoulder.html

Based on

The exercises are described in my own words from these NHS and Chartered Society of Physiotherapy resources. Repeats and holds are kept to the gentle, beginner end of the ranges they give. Links were checked in October 2026.

- Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS: Physiotherapy and frozen shoulder
<https://www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/media/xfdu2ul/physiotherapy-and-frozen-shoulder-276-v4.pdf>