

# **ASK YOUR PHYSICAL THERAPIST**

## **I Started Having Shoulder Pain A Few Weeks Ago And Now I Can't Reach Overhead Or Behind My Back, WHY?**

Many people of all ages have bouts of shoulder pain at times that is temporary. However, if you have shoulder pain that lingers and then you start to notice that you are losing the ability to reach overhead, behind your back, or are having difficulty using your arm for daily tasks, that IS an issue. If you have pain in the shoulder and / or arm and this worsens with use of the arm especially lifting the arm overhead or in combined motions such as throwing, this is likely due to a rotator cuff injury. Rotator cuff injuries require Physical Therapy in order to resolve completely and properly. However, in this case, where a person has pain and begins to lose range of motion, which impacts their ability to perform activities of daily living, they likely have what is known as a frozen shoulder. (Adhesive Capsulitis – medical term)

A frozen shoulder occurs when the joint capsule (which is the tissue that surrounds the ball and socket of your shoulder joint) becomes tightened like shrink-wrap. This “shrink wrap” effect of the joint capsule around the ball and socket of the shoulder joint does not allow the ball of the shoulder to move where it should in the capsule. This, in turn, then limits the range of motion in regards to moving your arm overhead, out to the side or behind your back. For instance, when you lift your arm forward over your head, the ball of the shoulder needs to move back and down in the shoulder joint capsule. If this cannot occur due to the fact that the capsule is tight, then the arm will not move overhead. This creates a loss of the ability to raise your arm overhead and then, the muscles

adaptively shorten to the position the shoulder capsule is keeping the shoulder/arm in. This further limits how far you can lift your arm. Often times, folks with frozen shoulder are limited in multiple positions, which means that they may not be able to lift their arm overhead, out to the side away from their body, and they may not be able to reach behind their back. Loss of all of these ranges of motion can severely limit your ability to perform activities of daily living as well as limit our ability to perform your job and or recreational activities.

### So How Do You Resolve Frozen Shoulder?

In order to restore range of motion, strength and ability to perform daily tasks as well as return to recreational activities, you **NEED** to have the capsule stretched in the areas that are tight. This stretching is called Joint Mobilization, which can **ONLY** be done by a Physical Therapist. Once the joint capsule is stretched, the muscles that have adaptively shortened need to be stretched as well. Finally, the muscles that shortened and caused you to not be able to lift your arm also will need to be strengthened since they were not being used for a long period of time.

Expert Physical Therapists at Cardin and Miller Physical Therapy can resolve the frozen shoulder or rotator cuff injury you are suffering from by performing what I explained above. **CALL TODAY** to schedule for your **FREE SCREEN - 717-245-0400** so that one of our expert Physical Therapists can listen to the issues you are experiencing and tell you how and if they can help you.

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