

Sweetwater Pain & Spine

Home Exercise Handout

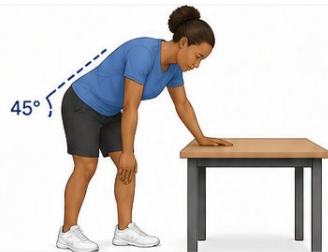
Adhesive Capsulitis (Frozen Shoulder)

Adhesive capsulitis (frozen shoulder) is caused by progressive inflammation and fibrosis of the glenohumeral joint capsule, producing pain and marked restriction of both active and passive shoulder motion in all directions. These exercises use gravity-assisted distraction and gentle passive stretching to reduce capsular compression, restore anterior and posterior capsule mobility, and gradually recover range of motion. Progress slowly within a pain-free or mild-stretch range—consistency over weeks to months produces the best results.

1 Pendulum Exercise (Grade I Distraction)

2–3 sets • 30–60 sec each direction • 1–2x per day

1



SET UP

Lean forward.
Place your non-affected hand on a table for support.
Let your affected arm hang down completely relaxed.
Do not use any effort with your affected shoulder.

2



CIRCLES

Using gentle trunk sway and gravity, allow your arm to swing in small circles.
Perform for 30–60 seconds.

3



FORWARD / BACK

Using gentle trunk sway, allow your arm to swing forward and then back.
Perform for 30–60 seconds.

4



SIDE TO SIDE

Using gentle trunk sway, allow your arm to swing side to side.
Perform for 30–60 seconds.

2 Supine Forward Flexion Stretch

2–3 sets • Hold 15 sec • 1–2x per day

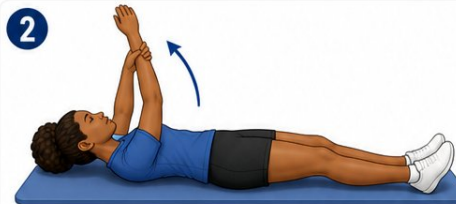
1



SET UP

Lie flat on your back on a firm surface (bed, floor, or table).
Keep your legs straight and your head supported in a neutral position.
Relax both arms at your sides.
Grasp the wrist or forearm of your affected arm with your unaffected hand.

2



ASSIST UP

Using your unaffected arm, gently lift your affected arm upward toward the ceiling.
Continue guiding the arm overhead toward the floor above your head.
Keep your affected arm completely relaxed—do not actively lift.
Avoid arching your back as the arm moves.

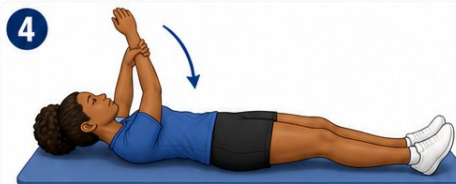
3



HOLD

Raise your arm until you feel a gentle stretch (not sharp pain).
Hold the position for 15 seconds.
Breathe slowly and allow the shoulder to stay relaxed.

4



LOWER SLOWLY

Slowly guide your arm back down to the starting position using your unaffected arm.
Maintain control throughout the motion.
Relax and repeat the movement for the prescribed number of repetitions.

3 Cross-Body Posterior Capsule Stretch

2–3 sets • Hold 20–30 sec • 1–2x per day

1



SET UP

Bring your affected arm across your body at shoulder height.
Keep your elbow straight (or slightly bent).
Use your opposite hand to grasp just above the elbow.

2



STRETCH

Gently draw your arm further across your chest.
Feel a deep stretch at the back of the shoulder (posterior capsule).
Keep your shoulders relaxed and down.

3



HOLD

Hold the stretch for 20–30 seconds.
Breathe normally and relax.
Sustained gentle stretch is more effective than aggressive pulling.

4



RELEASE SLOWLY

Slowly release the stretch and return to the starting position.
Repeat for the recommended set and hold times.

4 External Rotation Doorway Stretch

2–3 sets • Hold 20–30 sec • 1–2x per day

1



SET UP

Stand in a doorway.
Place the elbow and forearm of the affected side on the door frame.
Your elbow should be at 90° and at shoulder height.
Keep your forearm and wrist relaxed on the frame.

2



STRETCH

Keeping your elbow on the frame, rotate your body away from your arm.
Feel a deep stretch in the front of your shoulder and chest (anterior capsule).
Keep your posture tall and core engaged.

3



HOLD

Hold the stretch for 20–30 seconds.
The stretch should be a “good hurt,” not sharp pain.
Breathe slowly and relax into the stretch.

4



PROGRESS

Gradually move your feet further through the doorway to increase the rotational stretch.
Progress over weeks as your mobility improves.
Stop if you feel sharp pain.

■ Stop any exercise that causes sharp pain, new numbness or weakness, or worsening of symptoms, and contact our office. These exercises supplement but do not replace your provider's individualized plan.

Questions or concerns? Call Sweetwater Pain & Spine: (775) 870-1480

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