

Shoulder Scar/Capsular Release — Pre-Operative Patient Guide

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Frozen Shoulder / Shoulder Stiffness — Capsular Release, Lysis of Adhesions, and Manipulation

Your Condition & Procedure

The condition

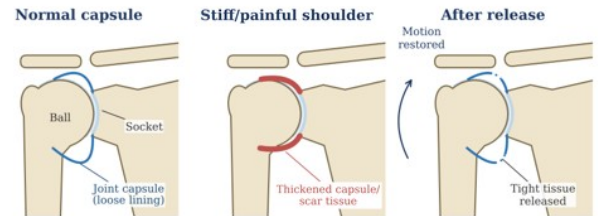
The shoulder joint is surrounded by a flexible lining called the **capsule**. In some cases, such as frozen shoulder or after an injury/surgery, scar tissue forms and the capsule becomes inflamed, thick, and tight. The result is pain and a loss of motion that has not improved enough with therapy.

The surgery

This is a minimally invasive, typically outpatient surgery done through small incisions with a camera and small instruments. The tight capsule and scar tissue are released, and the shoulder is then gently moved through its full range while you are asleep (manipulation). Nothing is repaired, so there is nothing to protect afterward. The final plan is determined during surgery.

Risks & benefits

Benefits: Most patients regain motion and have less pain, provided therapy and stretching are kept up.
Risks are uncommon and include infection, blood clots, stiffness coming back, a fracture or dislocation during the manipulation (rare), temporary nerve irritation, injury to nearby structures (such as nerves, blood vessels, or cartilage), stiffness, persistent pain, and the need for further surgery. These will be reviewed with you in detail before surgery.



Frozen shoulder and capsular release (illustration)

Before Surgery

- **Medications:** We will tell you what to stop and when (e.g., blood thinners, anti-inflammatories, some supplements, weight-loss injections).
- **Fasting:** Follow the instructions from your surgery coordinator/facility. In general, you should have nothing to eat or drink starting at midnight the night before surgery.
- **Nicotine:** Stop all nicotine products—they slow healing.
- **Equipment:** A sling is not typically needed; you will use the arm right away.
- **Physical therapy:** Schedule your first visit for the day after surgery, with daily visits the first week. Early therapy is essential.
- **Home:** Plan for a helper at first; a recliner can make sleep easier.
- **Medical history:** Let us know if you or anyone in your family has a history of blood clot disorders or a malignant hyperthermia reaction to anesthesia.
- **Health:** Call us if you develop a fever, illness, or skin problem near the shoulder.

Day of Surgery

- If instructed, take blood pressure/heart medications with a small sip of water.
- Arrive at the time given by your surgery coordinator.
- Bring your medication list, insurance card, and photo ID.
- Wear a loose, button-front shirt; leave jewelry and valuables at home.
- A responsible adult must drive you home. You may **not** drive yourself.

Immediately After Surgery

- You will recover in the recovery area; most patients go home the same day.
- Your surgeon will discuss the procedure with you and your support person.
- Your care team will review wound care, restrictions, medications, follow-up, and warning signs before discharge.

Milestone	What to Expect After Surgery (General Timeline)
Sling	None. Use the arm normally for light activities from day 1; there are no motion restrictions.
Therapy	Starts within 24 hours, with daily visits the first week and supervised therapy for at least 3 weeks. Stretching at home several times a day is what keeps your motion.
Daily life	Desk work often within the first week. Strengthening is added between 2 and 6 weeks and never replaces stretching. No driving while taking narcotic pain medication.
Work & sports	Full release typically at 6–12 weeks. Heavy labor and sports may take up to 4 months.
► Please note: This is a general guide only. Detailed post-operative instructions will be provided on the day of surgery, and your restrictions and timeline may change based on the findings and procedures performed.	

Learn More

We **strongly recommend** reading these pages from the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (OrthoInfo) before your surgery:

- **Your procedure: Shoulder Arthroscopy** — <https://orthoinfo.org/en/treatment/shoulder-arthroscopy/>

Questions before surgery? Call our office at (972) 378-1438. For a medical emergency, call 911.