

Adhesive Capsulitis (Non-Operative) Protocol

Weight-Bearing and Immobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WBAT • No immobilization
Aerobic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As tolerated
Range of Motion (ROM) and Strengthening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No limitations on AROM, AAROM, or PROM as tolerated with gentle PROM initially • ROM exercises within pain-free arc of motion • Emphasis on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ IR ▸ ER at 90° abduction while supine ▸ sleeper stretch ▸ full flexion and abduction with focus on glenohumeral motion rather than scapulothoracic motion (particularly from 0-80°) • Rotator cuff and scapular stabilization program exercises beginning at 0° and progressing to 45° and 90° as tolerated and without pain
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heat before and/or ice after PT sessions as needed. • Modalities (ice, heat, ultrasounds, etc.) as needed for stretching and ROM. Apply modalities with shoulder at end range of comfortable motion, not with arm at side. • Home Exercise Program (HEP) 3-4 times per day for up to 15 minutes per session.
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pain control • Minimize pain • Minimize joint stiffness

Phases of Adhesive Capsulitis	
Phase I "Freezing" Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May last 0-9 months • Increase in shoulder stiffness • Increase in shoulder pain • Treatment: pain control (activity modification, ice, NSAIDs, corticosteroid injection)
Phase II "Frozen" Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May last 3-12 months • Continued shoulder stiffness • Decrease in shoulder pain (often no pain) • Treatment: pain control (activity modification, ice, NSAIDs, corticosteroid injection), physical therapy, and possible manipulation under anesthesia and/or surgery
Phase III "Thawing" Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May last 6-24 months • Gradual decrease in shoulder stiffness