



• East Athens Physical Therapy Fall Kickball game on August 25, 2009.

• Duane Mellinger, PTA attended McKenzie Institute's part B course on July 24-26 in Nashville, TN. McKenzie is a technique used to treat low back and neck pain.

• Jenny Wisham, and her husband Richard, welcomed a new baby girl, Emily Kathryn, on June 23.



## What our patients have to say!

"Not knowing what to expect, the whole staff was very knowledgeable and answered all questions I had. I would refer anyone to this clinic. I feel great! A lot of tips on how to keep services going at home."

— Vickie, Lake Oconee

"The therapist, Jenny, was wonderful. She was very personable and passionate about her job. This experience could not have been any better."

— Ashley, Lake Oconee

"I have told many others about your facilities and treatment. I have nothing but great things to say about your complete organization. The friendly people, great atmosphere, and complete progressive treatment enabled me to make fantastic progress in my rehab."

— Bernard, Athens

"It has been a wonderful experience. Chris has been great, showing concern for all and giving encouragement. Debra always has a smile and a kind word for everyone."

— Lori, Danielsville

"Jennifer did an excellent job. She kept my spirits up and made me realize I could do more and improve."

— Lavon, Athens

"The experience was excellent. The staff is very professional and courteous to the patients. Jim Mike has a great personality and does an excellent job with the rehab process. Highly recommended!"

— Richard, Madison

## Understanding the "Frozen Shoulder"

The shoulder is a very complex joint. There are many different conditions that could affect the shoulder joint. Many of these conditions limit the range of motion within the shoulder followed by pain. If this is the case, you could have developed a "frozen shoulder".

### What is this?

The clinical name for a "frozen shoulder" is adhesive capsulitis. This condition is characterized by pain and limitation of shoulder range of motion in all directions. The patient is unable to fully move the arm in all planes actively, as well as passively.

### What causes it?

A frozen shoulder is caused by inflammation, scarring, tightening, and thickening of the shoulder capsule. In most cases, there is no known injury to the shoulder. Any injury to the shoulder, like tendonitis, bursitis, or a rotator cuff injury, can lead to adhesive capsulitis. A person can develop this condition after surgery or after the shoulder has been immobilized for a prolonged amount of time. According to Joe Kilzi, a Physicians Assistant at Athens Orthopedic Clinic, "estrogen hormone levels around menopause" can also lead to this condition.

### Who is at risk?

The majority of the people that have this condition are between the ages of 40 and 70. Women are twice as likely to develop adhesive capsulitis as men. Frozen shoulder has been linked to Parkinson's arthritis, shoulder surgery, breast surgery, and cardiac problems or surgery. Individuals who have been diagnosed with diabetes have a 10-20% chance of developing adhesive capsulitis. If you have a history of this condition, "there is a 15% chance that it will return on the same side and 10% on the other side, especially with diabetes." (J. Kilzi)

### What are the signs?

In the majority of the cases, the patient doesn't realize that they are limited until they start to feel pain with certain activities. These activities include, but are not limited to, putting on a belt or bra, brushing their hair, retrieving a wallet from the back pocket, and any overhead activities. The pain is usually described as a dull, achy pain on the outer and upper areas of the shoulder. There are three stages of a frozen shoulder.

The first stage, and typically the most painful, is called "Freezing." This stage is characterized by painful and restricted motion of the shoulder and can last between 6 to 12 weeks.

The second stage is called the "Frozen" stage. In this stage, the shoulder tends to become more limited in range, but the pain usually lessens. This can last between 4 to 9 months.

The third stage is the "Thawing" stage. This is where the shoulder slowly regains its motion. This stage takes the longest and can last between 5 months to over a year.

### What is the treatment for it?

If you are experiencing any of the signs of a frozen shoulder, you should first consult with your family physician to rule out any other conditions. The main goals of treatment for a frozen shoulder are to decrease pain, increase range of motion (ROM), and regain strength. Physical therapy can help you regain your ROM through an aggressive stretching program. Once the motion is regained in the shoulder, the patient will start exercises to regain strength. Modalities like heat along with ultrasound are used to heat the superficial and deeper tissues of the shoulder. Electrical stimulation is also used to decrease the pain in the shoulder.

In some cases where physical therapy doesn't help, the patient may have to undergo joint manipulation. "The percentage of patients that need manipulation is 50%." (J. Kilzi) In this case the patient will be under anesthesia and the doctor will passively move the shoulder to break up the scar tissue. The patient has a lot of responsibility to help regain the lost motion and strength. They will be required to perform the stretches many times throughout the day. If the exercises are only performed during a physical therapy treatment session, the problems will take longer to resolve. Even after a patient is discharged from physical therapy, they will be given a home exercise program to maintain the outcomes achieved while in therapy.



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## Comeback players



Allison Moore; Morgan Co. HS



Troy Micheletti; Cedar Shoals High School



Lance Chandler;  
Madison Co. HS



Fred Williams; Morgan Co. HS



John Dustin Hawkins; Morgan Co. HS

## Osteoarthritis and Physical Therapy

Osteoarthritis is a term that means inflammation in the joints. It can also be called degenerative joint disease and is the most common type of arthritis. Osteoarthritis causes the cartilage, which covers the ends of bones, in joints to breakdown. Cartilage functions to reduce friction in the joints and serve as a "shock absorber." As the condition progresses, the cartilage will become stiff and lose its elasticity, making it more susceptible to damage. Over time, the cartilage may wear away and ultimately end with bones rubbing against each other.

Osteoarthritis can occur in almost any joint in the body. It is most common in the weight bearing joints of the hips, knees, and spine, but it can also affect the fingers, thumb, neck and large toe.

### Who gets it?

Nearly 21 million Americans are affected by osteoarthritis. The chance of developing this condition increases with age. Most people over the age of 60 have osteoarthritis to some degree. This condition is more common in women than in men.

### What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of osteoarthritis often develop gradually and include:  
 Joint aching and soreness, especially with movement  
 Pain after overuse or after long periods of inactivity  
 Bony enlargements in the middle and end of joints of the fingers, which may or may not be painful  
 Joint swelling

### What are the Risk Factors?

There are several factors that increase a person's chance of developing osteoarthritis.  
 Heredity. A specific gene that is responsible for making cartilage can have an inherited defect that causes defective cartilage and will lead to more rapid deterioration of joints. People born with

joint abnormalities or abnormalities of the spine are more likely to develop this condition.  
 Obesity. Obesity increases the risk for osteoarthritis of the knee and hip.  
 Injury. Injuries can contribute to the development of osteoarthritis. Athletes who have knee-related injuries may be at higher risk of developing osteoarthritis of the knee, or people who have had a severe back injury may be more at risk of developing osteoarthritis of the spine. Also broken bones near a joint can lead to osteoarthritis in that joint.  
 Joint overuse. Overuse of certain joints increases your risk. For example, jobs requiring repeated bending of the knee put those people at risk for osteoarthritis of the knee.

### How is this treated?

Physical therapy can strengthen the muscles surrounding the affected joint. Also the use of modalities, such as hot and cold packs and ultrasound can help to decrease the pain. Your physical therapist may recommend the use of an assistive device to help decrease pressure on the joints.

Exercise is important to improve your joint movement and to strengthen the muscles surrounding the affected joint. Exercise will also help you to stay at your recommended weight, which will help to prevent osteoarthritis by reducing the stress on weight-bearing joints, or once you have the condition, exercise will help to relieve the stress and pain in your joints, and may decrease the rate of progression of the condition. When exercising however, you should avoid activities that are stressful on your joints or that increase joint pain, such as jogging or high impact aerobics. Your physical therapist can help you develop an exercise program that is safe for you.

By: Jenny Wisham, PT

