The 3 Phases of Degenerative Arthritis (According to Dr. Kirkaldy-Willis):

**The Dysfunction Phase**  
Pathological changes are minor and reversible.

**The Unstable Phase**  
Pathological changes are permanent and irreversible.

**The Phase of Stabilization**

If the fixation (which is a component of the dysfunction phase of arthritis) is not treated properly, the degeneration of the joint will progress into the 2nd and 3rd phases of arthritis. Unfortunately, this is where the pathological changes become permanent and irreversible.

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**THE STRESSES OF LIFE**

Kirkaldy-Willis' Degenerative Cascade—There are 3 Phases of Degenerative Arthritis

The First Phase of Arthritis—The Dysfunction Phase—Spinal Joint Dysfunction  
(The pathology of the 3 S’s—Spasm, Swelling, and Scar Tissue)

Abnormal spinal mechanics  

"JOINT FIXATION"  
The Thorn in the Foot  
Classic example of a dysfunctional, fixed joint is the Frozen Shoulder Syndrome

No Manipulation

Continued abnormal spinal mechanics—increasing “wear and tear”

More spasm, swelling, scar tissue—more fixation

Loss of motion as a result of the fixation causes a decrease in nutrients to articular cartilage and the build-up of waste products—the result is cartilage cell death.

Progression into the 2nd and 3rd Phases of Degeneration

Degenerative changes in and around the joint

**Facet Changes:**
- Facet synovitis (swelling)
- Facet Syndrome
- Facet spurring (arthritis)
- Sacroiliac Syndrome
- Foraminal stenosis
- Central canal stenosis

**Disc Changes:**
- Cracks and fissures in the disc (annular tears)
- Loss of nuclear material
- Decreased disc space
- Bulges and protrusions in the disc (herniations)
- Arthritic spurs

**Soft Tissue Changes:**
- (muscles, tendons, ligaments, and fascia)
  - Spasms/strains/sprains
  - Tendonitis/fascitis
  - Trigger Points (knots)
  - Contractures/adhesions
  - Fibromyalgia?

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