Arthroscopic Subacromial Decompression Physical Therapy Protocol

Phase I: Immediate Motion (Weeks 0 to 2)

Goals
- Re-establish non-painful range of motion
- Prevent muscular atrophy
- Re-establish dynamic stability
- Decrease pain and inflammation

Week 1
Exercise
- Elbow/wrist/hand exercises
  - Pendulums
  - Pulleys (flexion, scaption/abduction/internal rotation)
  - Wand exercises (flexion/external rotation at 30 to 45 degrees of abduction)
  - Isometrics
  - Rhythmic stabilization exercises (external rotation/internal rotation, flexion/extension)
- Cryotherapy and modalities for pain and inflammation every hour for 20 minutes

Week 2
Exercise
- May initiate heat prior to exercise if needed
- Continue range of motion exercises and progress as tolerated
- Progress external rotation/internal rotation at 90 degrees abduction
- Continue submaximal isometrics
- Initiate prone rowing
- Initiate external rotation/internal rotation tubing exercises (arm at side)
- Continue cryotherapy for pain management

Phase II: Intermediate (Weeks 2 to 6)

Criteria to Progress to Phase II
- Full range of motion
- Minimal pain and tenderness
- 4/5 manual muscle testing of external rotation/internal rotation/flexion

Goals
- Regain and improve muscular strength
- Normalize arthrokinematics
- Improve neuromuscular control of the shoulder complex
- Diminish pain
Weeks 2 to 3
Exercise
- Initiate isotonic strengthening program (no weight)
  - Shoulder elevation
  - Prone rowing
  - Prone horizontal abduction
  - Prone shoulder extension to neutral
  - Sidelying external rotation
  - Sidelying abduction to 90 degrees
- After one week of performing exercises with no pain and proper form, progress to one pound weight
  - Joint mobilizations
  - Initiate neuromuscular control exercises for scapula
  - Initiate trunk and lower extremity exercises
  - Initiate upper extremity endurance exercises
- Continue cryotherapy for pain management

Weeks 4 to 5
Exercise
- Progress to fundamental shoulder exercise program

Phase III: Dynamic (Weeks 6 to 12)
Criteria to Progress to Phase III
- Full, non-painful range of motion
- No pain or tenderness
- Muscular strength to 70 percent of contralateral side
Goals
- Improve strength, power and endurance
- Improve neuromuscular control
- Prepare athlete to return to sport

Weeks 6 to 8
Exercise
- Continue isotonic program-fundamental shoulder
- Progress strengthening exercises
- Continue endurance exercises
- Initiate plyometric activities (two hand drills)
  - Chest pass
  - Side to side throws

Weeks 9 to 12
Exercise
- Continue exercises as listed above
- Initiate one hand plyometric drills
  - Wall dribbles
  - Baseball throws
  - Shovel throws
- Initiate interval sports program at weeks 10 to 12
Phase IV: Return to Activity (Weeks 13 to 22)

Criteria to Progress to Phase IV
- Full, non-painful range of motion
- No pain or tenderness
- Satisfactory muscular strength
- Satisfactory clinical exam

Goals
- Progressively increase activities to prepare for full functional return

Weeks 13 to 22

Exercise
- Continue range of motion and strengthening programs
- Continue self capsular stretches as needed
- Continue fundamental shoulder exercise program
- Continue interval sports program
- Gradually return to overhead activities