Rotator Cuff Repair Post-operative Rehabilitation Protocol

Phase I: Days 1 to 28

Days 1 to 6

Brace
- Abduction brace/sling, remove sling only to bathe and to complete exercises

Shoulder Motion
Passive Range of Motion:
- Pendulum exercises
Active Range of Motion:
- Cervical, elbow, fingers and hand

Strengthening
Isometrics:
- Scapular strengthening

Note: Cryotherapy regularly for pain and swelling. Office visit two to three days post-op for dressing change.

Days 7 to 28

Goals
- Passive flexion to 90
- External rotation in scapular plane to >/= 35
- Internal rotation to body/thorax

Brace
- Abduction brace/sling, remove sling only to bathe and to complete exercises

Shoulder Motion
Passive Range of Motion:
- As tolerated painfree in supine position
- Flexion to 90 (may go beyond if tolerated)
- External rotation in scapular plane to >/=35
- Internal rotation to body/thorax
- Pendulum
- Pulley exercises

Active Range of Motion:
- Elbow, wrist, hand and fingers
- Seated scapular retractions

Strengthening
Resistive Range of Motion:
- Elbow, wrist, hand and fingers

Fitness
- May resume general conditioning program (i.e. walking, stationary bike)
- Aquatherapy/pool therapy suitable at three weeks post-op

Note: Office visit to remove sutures approximately one week post-op.
Phase II: Weeks 4 to 6

Goals
• Full passive range of motion by four to six weeks post-op

Brace
• Abduction brace/sling. Pillow may be removed at week four post-op. Begin to wean out of sling between four to six weeks post-op, discontinue brace/sling at end of week six post-op.

Shoulder Motion
Passive Range of Motion:
• Pendulum exercises
• End range stretch external rotation, internal rotation and elevation
• Progressive passive range of motion until full passive range of motion at weeks four to five

Active Assisted Range of Motion:
• Flexion, internal rotation, external rotation in supine position (adduction and behind back)
• Pulley exercises

Active Range of Motion:
• Prone rowing to neutral arm position
• Aquatherapy for light active range of motion exercises

Joint mobilizations:
• Gentle scapular/glenohumeral joint mobilization as indicated to regain full passive range of motion

Note: May begin use of heat before range of motion exercises. Continue cryotherapy as needed.

Phase II: Weeks 6 to 12

Weeks 6 to 8

Brace
• None

Shoulder Motion
Passive Range of Motion:
• Continue exercises

Active Assisted Range of Motion:
• Continue exercises

Active Range of Motion:
• Flexion in scapular plane, abduction, external rotation, internal rotation

Strengthening
Isometrics:
• Rotator cuff muscles

Note: Continue periscapular exercises

Weeks 9 to 11

Shoulder Motion
Passive Range of Motion:
• Continue as needed

Active Range of Motion:
• Continue as needed

Proprioception:
• Dynamic stabilization exercises
**Strengthening**

Resistive Range of Motion: Begin
- Theraband external rotation, internal rotation
- External rotation side lying (lateral decubitus)
- Lateral raises
- Full can in scapular plane (no empty can abduction exercises)
- Rowing, horizontal abduction and extension – all **prone**
- Elbow extension and flexion

**Weeks 12 to 13**
- Continue all exercises above
- Initiate light functional activities as permitted

**Phase IV: Weeks 14 +**

**Week 14**
- Continue all exercises listed above
- Progress to fundamental shoulder exercises

**Week 16**

**Shoulder Motion**
- Passive Range of Motion:
  - Continue range of motion and self-capsular stretching for range of motion maintenance

**Strengthening**
- Resistive Range of Motion: Begin
  - Continue progression of strengthening exercises

**Neuromuscular/Proprioception:**
- Advance proprioceptive and neuromuscular activities

Note: Return to light sport specific activity (i.e. golf chipping/putting) if doing well.

**Week 20**

**Motion**
- Continue strengthening and stretching for maintenance

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**Helping you achieve the optimal activity level for your lifestyle is my first priority.**

- Scott Gudeman, MD

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