

## 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  $\geq 35$
- 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  $\geq 35$
- 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

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

- Scott Gudeman, MD



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