
Arthroscopic SLAP Repair Rehab Protocol

Overall Goals

- Control pain and inflammation
- Regain normal strength, endurance and range of motion
- Achieve the level of function based on patient goals

This protocol is based upon goal-orientated progression. Each patient is different and should be treated according to their tolerance in therapy.

Phase I: Protected Motion (Weeks 0 to 6)

Goals

- Protect the anatomic repair
- Prevent/minimize the side effect of immobilization
- Promote dynamic stability
- Diminish pain and inflammation

Day 1 to Week 2

Brace

- Sling for six weeks
- Sleep in sling for six weeks

Modalities

- Cryotherapy, modalities as indicated

Range of Motion

- Wrist/hand active range of motion/active assisted range of motion
- Hand-gripping exercises
- Passive range of motion/active assistive range of motion
 - Flexion and elevation in the plane of the scapula to 60 degrees (week two, flexion to 75 degrees)
 - External rotation/internal rotation with arm in scapular plane
 - External rotation to 10 to 15 degrees
 - Internal rotation to 45 degrees
- No active range of motion external rotation, extension or abduction

Exercise

- Submaximal isometrics for all rotator cuff, periscapular and shoulder musculature
- No isolated biceps contractions (i.e. no active elbow flexion) for six weeks

Weeks 3 to 4

Modalities

- Continue use of cryotherapy, modalities as indicated

Range of Motion

- Continue gentle passive range of motion/active assistive range of motion exercises
(rate of progression based on patient's tolerance)
 - Flexion and elevation in the plane of the scapula to 90 degrees
 - Abduction to 75 to 85 degrees

- External rotation in scapular plane to 25 to 30 degrees
- Internal rotation in scapular plane to 55 to 60 degrees
- No active range of motion external rotation, extension or elevation

Exercise

- Initiate rhythmic stabilization drills within above range of motion
- Initiate proprioceptive training within above range of motion
- Progress isometrics as above

Weeks 5 to 6

Brace

- Discontinue sling at six weeks

Range of Motion

- Begin active range of motion of shoulder (all planes, gravity eliminated positions then gravity resisted position once adequate mechanics)
- Gradually improve passive range of motion and active range of motion
 - Flexion and elevation in the plane of the scapula to 145 degrees
 - Abduction to 90 degrees
 - External rotation 45 to 50 degrees at 45 degrees abduction
 - Internal rotation 55 to 60 degrees at 45 degrees abduction
 - Extension to tolerance

Exercise

- May initiate gentle stretching exercises
- Gentle proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation manual resistance
- Initiate prone exercise program for periscapular musculature
- Begin active range of motion elbow flexion and extension
- No biceps strengthening

Phase II: Moderate Protection (Weeks 7 to 14)

Goals

- Gradually restore full active range of motion and passive range of motion at week 10
- Preserve the integrity of the surgical repair
- Restore muscular strengthening and balance

Weeks 7 to 9

Range of Motion

- Gradually progress passive range of motion/active range of motion
 - Flexion and elevation in the plane of the scapula to 180 degrees
 - Abduction to 90 degrees until week eight, then gradually increase to full
 - External rotation 90 to 95 degrees at 90 degrees abduction
 - Internal rotation 70 to 75 degrees at 90 degrees abduction
 - Extension to tolerance

Exercise

- Begin isotonic rotator cuff, periscapular and shoulder strengthening program
- Continue proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation strengthening
- Type II Repairs: Begin sub maximal pain free biceps isometrics
- Type IV and Complex Repairs: Continue active range of motion elbow flexion and extension, no biceps isometric or isotonic strengthening

Weeks 10 to 12

Range of Motion

- Progress external rotation passive range of motion/active range of motion to thrower's motion
 - External rotation 100 to 115 degrees at 90 degrees abduction in throwers at weeks 10 to 12
- Progress shoulder isotonic strengthening exercises as above
- Continue all stretching exercises as needed to maintain range of motion
- Progress range of motion to functional demands (i.e. overhead athlete)

Exercise

- Type II Repairs: Begin gentle resisted biceps isotonic strengthening at week 12
- Type IV and Complex Repairs: Begin gentle sub maximal pain free biceps isometrics

Phase III: Minimal Protection (Weeks 14 to 20)

Criteria for Progression to Phase III

- Full non painful range of motion
- Good stability
- Muscular strength at 4 to 5 or better
- No pain or tenderness

Goals

- Establish and maintain full range of motion
- Improve muscular strength, power and endurance
- Gradually initiate functional exercises

Weeks 14 to 16

Exercise

- Continue all stretching exercises (capsular stretches)
- Maintain thrower's motion (especially external rotation)
- Continue rotator cuff, periscapular and shoulder strengthening exercises
- Type II Repairs: Progress isotonic biceps strengthening as appropriate
- Type IV and Complex Repairs: Progress to isotonic biceps strengthening as appropriate
- Proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation manual resistance
- Endurance training
- Initiate light plyometric program
- Restricted sports activities (light swimming, half golf swings)

Weeks 16 to 20

Exercise

- Continue all exercises listed above
- Continue all stretching
- Continue plyometric program
- Initiate interval sport program (e.g. throwing)

Phase IV: Advanced Strengthening (Weeks 20 to 26)

Criteria for Progression to Phase IV

- Full non painful range of motion
- Satisfactory static stability
- Muscular strength at 75 to 80 percent of contralateral side
- No pain or tenderness

Goals

- Enhanced muscular strength, power and endurance
- Progress functional activities
- Maintained shoulder stability

Weeks 20 to 26

Exercise

- Continue flexibility exercises
- Continue isotonic strengthening program
- Proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation manual resistance patterns
- Plyometric strengthening
- Progress interval sports programs

Phase V: Return to Activity (Months 6 to 9)

Goals

- Gradually progress sport activities to unrestricted participation
- Continue stretching and strengthening program