

Large Full Thickness Rotator Cuff Repair Protocol

Phase I (Weeks 0 to 6)

Goals

- Protect surgery
- Decrease pain and inflammation
- Gentle passive range of motion
- Patient education

Brace

- UltraSling (0 to 6 weeks depending on repair)

Exercise

- Modalities including heat, interferential current, ultrasound when necessary
- Elbow, wrist and hand exercises
- Cervical spine stretches
- Pendulum exercises may begin at two weeks
- Scapular mobilization and strengthening
- At four to six weeks post-op:
 - Begin passive range of motion: gentle flexion to 90°, abduction to tolerance (be cautious with this movement), external rotation/internal rotation as tolerated at 30° shoulder abduction
- Aquatic therapy

Phase II (Weeks 6 to 12)

Goals

- Control pain and inflammation
- Continue to work on range of motion throughout phase; use caution throughout
- Begin gentle stretching

Range of Motion

- Passive range of motion: all directions as tolerated with caution into flexion

Exercise

- Modalities as needed
- Aquatic therapy combined with gentle resistive activity
- Glenohumeral and scapular joint mobilization
- Isometric external rotation/internal rotation
- Begin biceps, triceps and scapular strengthening
- Upper body exercises (mid Phase II)

Phase III (Weeks 12 to 24)

Goals

- Functional, pain-free range of motion
- Improve strength and neuromuscular control (80 percent normal strength)
- Progress activity specific exercises at end of phase

Exercise

- Instruct in self-stretches
- Stretching as needed
- Increase upper quadrant strength and endurance
- Begin machine weighted strengthening
- Begin coordination exercises (ball toss, body blade)
- Biodex testing/training if requested by Dr. Lavery

Phase IV (Week 24 and Beyond)**Goals**

- Maximum range of motion
- Improve strength (100 percent)
- Return to sport

Exercise

- Self-stretches
- Strengthening rotator cuff exercises at 0, 45 and 90°
- Advanced machine weighted exercises
- Sport/activity specific exercise