
Medium Sized Full Thickness Rotator Cuff Repair Protocol

Phase I (Weeks 0 to 6)

Goals

- Protect surgery
- Decrease pain and inflammation
- Increase pain-free range of motion
- Maintain distal muscle strength
- Patient education

Brace

- UltraSling (0 to 6 weeks)

Exercise

- Modalities including heat, interferential current, ultrasound
- Elbow, wrist and hand exercises
- Cervical spine stretches
- Pendulum exercises
- Scapular mobilization and strengthening
- Begin passive range of motion: gentle flexion to 90°, abduction, external rotation and internal rotation as tolerated
- Aquatic therapy after three weeks (if available)
- Cane exercises at the end of Phase I
- Home exercise program

Phase II (Weeks 6 to 12)

Goals

- Control pain and inflammation
- Functional range of motion by end of Phase II
- Begin stretching
- Able to perform self-care activities of daily living with involved extremity

Exercise

- Modalities as necessary
- Active assistive range of motion with cane: all directions as tolerated
- Passive range of motion: all directions as tolerated with caution into flexion
- Glenohumeral joint mobilization
- Isometric rotator cuff strengthening progressing to gentle resisted exercise
- Biceps, triceps and scapular strengthening
- Upper body exercises (mid Phase II)
- Proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation for scapula and shoulder
- Home exercise program

Phase III (Weeks 12 to 24)

Goals

- Full, pain-free range of motion
- Pain-free overhead activities
- Improve strength and neuromuscular control (80% normal strength)
- Progress activity specific exercises
- Improve endurance

Exercise

- Upper body exercises
- Self-stretches
- Progress rotator cuff and scapular strengthening
- 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

- Improve strength (100%)
- Return to sport

Exercise

- Self-stretches
- Progress strengthening, coordination and endurance exercise
- Sport/activity specific exercise