

REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

ARTHROSCOPIC ROTATOR CUFF REPAIR

(1 and 2 tendon repairs <4cm²)

Post-Operative Physical Therapy Protocol

Phase I: - Immediate Post Surgical Phase (days 1 – 10)

Goals: Maintain integrity of the repair
Gradually increase PROM
Diminish pain/inflammation
Prevent muscular inhibition
No active elevation

Sling/Cradle : First 4 wks wear when on feet. May take off for rest, sitting, sleeping.

Days 1 – 6: (Home PT)

- Abduction brace/sling
- Pendulum Exercises
- AAROM – T-Bar
IR/ER – scapular plane at 45 degrees abd – pain-free range
- PROM
Flexion to tolerance
IR/ER – scapular plane at 45 degrees abd – pain-free range
- Elbow/hand exercises – gripping and ROM
- Submaximal isometrics (day 4 – 5)
Flexion/bent elbow
IR/ER
Elbow flexion
- Ice, modality – 15 – 20 minutes every hour
- Sleep in brace/sling

Days 7 – 10: (Initiate Outpatient PT)

- Continue use of sling
- Pendulum
- Progress PROM
 - Flexion – 115 degrees
 - ER – scapular plane at 45 degrees abd – 20 – 25 degrees
 - IR – scapular plane at 45 degrees abd – 30 – 35 degrees
- AAROM exercises – T-Bar
 - IR/ER – scapular plane at 45 degrees abd
 - Flexion to tolerance
- Continue Elbow/hand ROM and gripping
- Continue submaximal isometrics:
 - Flexion/bent elbow
 - Extension/bent elbow
 - Abduction/bent elbow
 - IR/ER – scapular plane
 - Elbow flexion
- Initiate RS – IR/ER at 45 degrees abduction
- Ice for pain control – 6 – 7 times per day/as needed
- Continue sleeping in brace/sling until MD discontinues

Precautions:

- 1. No active lifting**
- 2. No excessive shoulder extension**
- 3. No excessive stretching or sudden unprotected movements**
- 4. No supporting body weight with hands**
- 5. Keep incision/portals clean and dry**

Phase II – Protection Phase (days 15 – week 6)

Goals: Allow healing of soft tissue
Do Not Overstress healing tissue
Gradually restore full PROM (week 4 – 5)
Re-establish dynamic shoulder stability
Diminish pain/inflammation

Days 15 – 21:

- Continue use of sling
- PROM to tolerance
Flexion – 140-155 degrees
IR/ER at 90 degrees abduction to at least 45 degrees
- AAROM to tolerance
Flexion
IR/ER in scapular plane at 45 degrees abduction
Initiate IR/ER at 90 degrees abduction
- Dynamic stabilization drills
Rhythmic stabilization
IR/ER in scapular plane
Flexion/extension
- Continue isometrics
- Continue ice as needed
- Continue prior precautions

Weeks 3– 5:

- Full PROM by week 4
- Continue previous exercises
- IR/ER strengthening theraband – 0 degree abd (towel roll)
- Prone rowing to neutral
- Prone extension
- Isotonic elbow flexion
- Ice as needed
- Heat prior to exercises
- Pool exercise – if available

Week 5 – 6:

- Heat prior to exercise
- Continue AAROM/stretching
- Initiate AROM
Flexion in scapular plane
Abduction

- Progress isotonics
ER theraband
Sidelying IR
Prone rowing
Prone horizontal abduction (bent elbow)

Phase III – Intermediate Phase (week 7 – 14)

Goals: Full AROM (week 8 – 10)
Maintain full PROM
Improve dynamic stability
Improve shoulder strength
Return to functional activity

Week 7:

- Continue stretching and PROM – as needed
- Continue dynamic stabilization drills
- Progress strengthening
IR/ER theraband
ER sidelying
Lateral raises
Full can in scapular plane
Prone rowing
Prone horizontal abduction
Prone extension
Elbow flexion/Elbow exercises

Note: Patient must be able to elevate arm without scapular substitution before initiating isotonic, if unable continue prior exercises.

Week 8:

- Continue all previous exercises
- Functional shoulder activity

Week 10:

- Initiate isotonics - add 1# weight if no pain or substitution.

Week 11 – 14:

- Progress all exercises
- Continue ROM and stretching
- Continue strengthening – increase 1#/10 days if not painful

Phase IV – Advanced Strengthening Phase – (weeks 15 – 22)

Goals: Maintain full ROM
Improve muscular strength and power
Return to functional activity

Week 15:

- Continue ROM/stretching – as needed
- Self capsular stretches
- Progress strengthening
- Initiate interval sports – ie. Golf program as applicable

Week 20 -22:

- Continue all exercises
- Progress golf program
- Initiate interval tennis – if applicable
- Initiate swimming – if applicable

Return to Sport General Guidelines:

- Skiing 4 months
- Biking indoors – 2-3 weeks
- Biking outdoors – 3 months
- Throwing – 4-6 months
- Golf – short irons/putting 12 weeks, long irons 14 weeks, playing 16-20 weeks