



Rotator Cuff Repair Rehabilitation Protocol

Phase I: Post-operative Weeks 0-6

Weeks 0-5:

- No AROM exercise of the shoulder
- Consistent use of sling unless otherwise instructed (weaning starting at week 4 at earliest)
- Pendulum exercises, elbow AAROM and gripping 4x per day starting POD 3
- Ice and TENS for pain control at least 4x per day

Weeks 5-6:

- Outpatient physical therapy initiated at week 5
- Wean out of sling entirely by week 6 if not already achieved
- PROM of shoulder to empty end feel with intermittently applied grade II mobilizations in the open packed position of the shoulder. Maximum PROM is:
 - 140° forward flexion
 - 80° abduction
 - 45° external rotation
 - 35° internal rotation
- Scaption pulleys at 10 minute maximum with 2 minute rest provided at 5 minutes
- Pendulum, elbow AAROM and progressive gripping exercises
- Application of ice and TENS for pain control at end of therapy session and at frequency of 4x / day at home.

Phase II: Post-operative Weeks 6-12

Criteria for progression to Phase 2:

- 6 Weeks of healing has occurred
- Painless PROM to:
 - 120°-140° forward flexion
 - 60° - 80° abduction
 - 40° external rotation

General formula = Warm up, strengthening to fatigue (not pain), PROM, ice with E-stim

Week 6:

- Upper extremity ergometer - maximum 8 minutes (4 fwd / 4 retro) minimal resistance
- Pulley scaption - 10 minute maximum
- Thera-Band Wall Station exercises. Maximum resistance and repetitions:
 - Rows - Blue 15 x 3
 - Extension from 45° pull - Green 15 x 3
 - External Rotation from 0° - Yellow 15 x 3

- Internal Rotation from 0° - Red 15 x 3
- Triceps extension - Blue 15 x 3
- Wall walks on finger ladder in scaption - 10 x 3
- PROM into springy end feel - ensure no worse afterwards. Intermittently apply grade II mobilizations in the open packed position of the shoulder. Maximum PROM:
 - 160° Flexion
 - 125° Abduction
 - 65° External Rotation
 - 55° Internal Rotation
- Ice & NMES to Supra/infraspinatus and Mid/Lower trapezius with AROM

Week 7:

- Continue exercise and PROM protocol from week 6
- Additional exercises (with maximal weight and repetitions listed):
 - AROM Flexion to 90° with 0-2#, 15 x 3
 - AROM Scaption to 90° with 0-2#, 15 x 3
 - AAROM Dowel shoulder flexion and external rotation 15 sec hold x 10
- Ice & NMES to Supra/infraspinatus and Mid/Lower trapezius with AROM
- Initiate ERMI or JAS device authorization if falling behind on PROM targets

Week 8:

- Continue exercise protocols from week 6&7 with following changes and/or maximal resistance / repetitions:
 - Upper Extremity Ergometer with moderate resistance x 8 minutes (4 fwd / 4retro)
 - Pulleys 10 minute maximum - 5 min scaption / 5 min abduction (with thumb up)
 - Wall walks on finger ladder with progressive eccentric lowering 15 x 3
 - Thera-Band Wall Station Rows - Blue 15 x 3
 - Thera-Band Wall Station Extension from 45° pull - Blue 15 x 3
 - Thera-Band Wall Station External Rotation from 0° - Red 15 x 3
 - Thera-Band Wall Station Internal Rotation from 0° - Green 15 x 3
 - AROM Flexion to 90° with 2#, 15 x 3
 - AROM Scaption to 90° with 2#, 15 x 3
- Addition of the following exercises (maximal resistance and repetitions noted):
 - Prone Horizontal abduction 0-2#, 15 x 2-3
 - Prone Extension 0-3#, 15 x 2-3
 - Prone Scaption 0-2#, 15 x 2-3
 - Prone Row 3-10#, 15 x 2-3
 - Shoulder depression / modified pushups 20 sec x 10
 - Sleeper stretch 30 sec x 10
 - Supine Serratus Punch 1-5#, 15 x 3
- PROM into springy end feel - ensure no worse afterwards. Intermittently apply grade II mobilizations in the open packed position of the shoulder. Maximum PROM:
 - 165° Flexion
 - 145° Abduction

- 80° External Rotation
- 65° Internal Rotation
- Addition of the following AAROM / PROM exercises (maximum reps / time noted - ensure patient is no worse afterwards):
 - Behind the back reaching AROM progressed to strap stretching - 5 min
 - Table flexion and external rotation stretching - 30 seconds x 10 each
- Ice & NMES to Supra/infraspinatus and Mid/Lower trapezius with AROM
- Dispense ERMI or JAS device prn if falling below PROM targets

Weeks 9-12:

- Continue Upper Extremity Ergometer - maximum 10 minutes (5 fwd / 5 retro)
- Continue or D/C pulley and table stretching exercises dependent on PROM and stiffness
- Progress eccentric wall ladder to > 90° flexion and scaption strengthening:
 - AROM Flexion up to 145° with 3-5#, 15 x 3
 - AROM Scaption up to 145° with 3-5#, 15 x 3
- Progress Thera-Band Wall Station Rows and Extension to Cable Column resistance
- Progress Internal and External Rotation to blue resistance band accordingly
- Increase prone strengthening, Serratus strengthening and shoulder depression protocol to fatigue tolerance - max repetitions 20 x 3
- PROM performed until following minimum PROM goals achieved:
 - 165° Flexion and scaption
 - 80° External rotation
 - 75° Internal rotation
- Continue behind the back strap / sleeper stretching prn.
- Potential additional Thera-Band Exercises:
 - PNF D2 Flexion
 - 3-way shoulder progression (cheerleader exercises)
- Ice after exercise (D/C TENS and NMES stimulator)

Phase III: Post-operative Weeks 12+

Weeks 12+:

- Progression of resistance and / or repetitions of entire week 9-12 protocol with the exception of PROM (unless clinically indicated)
- Addition of the following functional activities to progress to RTW requirements (baseline established with observed effort and age appropriate HR measurements plus 5-10# per week increase):
 - Floor to Waist lifting
 - Horizontal Carry
 - Waist to overhead lifting
 - Job-specific functional task training
- Ice after exercise prn