

## REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

### ARTHROSCOPIC ROTATOR CUFF REPAIR

#### (1 and 2 tendon repairs <4cm<sup>2</sup>)

#### *Post-Operative Physical Therapy Protocol*

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#### **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