



Department of Physical Rehabilitation

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Arthroscopic Rotator Cuff Repair Small to Medium Tears
Phase I - Immediate Post-Surgical Phase (Days 1-10)

Goals: Maintain Integrity of the Repair
Gradually Increase Passive Range of Motion
Diminish Pain and Inflammation
Prevent Muscular Inhibition

Days 1 – 6 :

- Abduction pillow brace
- Pendulum Exercises
- Active Assisted ROM Exercise (L-Bar)
- ER/IR in Scapular Plane at 45 degrees of abduction (pain-free ROM)
- Passive ROM
- Flexion to tolerance (painful ROM)
- ER/IR in Scapular Plane at 45 degrees of abduction (pain-free ROM)
- Elbow/Hand Gripping & ROM Exercises
- Submaximal pain free Isometrics (initiate days 4-5)
- Flexion with elbow bent to 90 degrees
- External Rotation
- Internal Rotation
- Elbow Flexors
- Cryotherapy for Pain and Inflammation
- Ice 15-20 minutes every hour
- Sleeping
- Sleep in pillow brace

Days 7 – 10:

- Continue use of pillow brace
- Pendulum Exercises
- Progress Passive ROM to Tolerance
- Flexion to at least 115 degrees
- ER in Scapular Plane at 45 degrees abduction to 20-25 degrees
- IR in Scapular Plane at 45 degrees abduction to 30-35 degrees
- Active Assisted ROM Exercises (L-bar)
- ER/IR in Scapular Plane at 45 degrees abduction
- Flexion to Tolerance*



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***Therapist Provides Assistance by Supporting Arm (esp. with arm lowering)**

Days 7 – 10 (continued):

- Continue Elbow/Hand ROM & Gripping Exercises
- Continue Isometrics (submaximal and sub painful)
- Flexion with Bent Elbow
- Extension with Bent Elbow
- Abduction with Bent Elbow
- ER/IR with Arm in Scapular Plane
- Elbow Flexion
- Initiate rhythmic stabilization ER/IR at 45 degrees abduction
- Continue Use of Ice for Pain Control
- Use Ice at least 6-7 times daily
- Sleeping
- Continue Sleeping in Brace until Physician Instructs

Precautions:

1. No Lifting of Objects
2. No Excessive Shoulder Extension
3. No Excessive Stretching or Sudden Movements
4. No Supporting of Body Weight by Hands
5. Keep Incision Clean & Dry

II. Phase II - Protection Phase (Day 15 – Week 6)

Goals: Allow Healing of Soft Tissue
Do Not Overstress Healing Tissue
Gradually Restore Full Passive ROM (Week 4-5)
Re-Establish Dynamic Shoulder Stability
Decrease Pain & Inflammation

Days 15 – 21:

- Continue Use of Sling or Brace (physician or therapist will determine when to discontinue)
- Passive Range of Motion to Tolerance
- Flexion to 140-155 degrees
- ER at 90 degrees abduction to at least 45 degrees
- IR at 90 degrees abduction to at least 45 degrees
- Active Assisted ROM to Tolerance
- Flexion (continue use of arm support)

**CANTON-POTSDAM
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CARING BEYOND MEDICINE

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- ER/IR in Scapular Plane at 45 degrees abduction
- ER/IR at 90 degrees Abduction
- Dynamic Stabilization Drills

Days 15 – 21 (continued):

- Rhythmic Stabilization Drills
- ER/IR in Scapular Plane
- Flexion/Extension at 100 degrees Flexion and 125 degrees flexion
- Continue All Isometric Contractions
- Initiate scapular isometrics
- Continue Use of Cryotherapy as needed
- Continue All Precautions
- No lifting
- No excessive motion

Weeks 4 - 5:

- Patient should exhibit full passive range of motion by week 4
- Continue all exercises listed above
- Initiate ER/IR strengthening using exercise tubing at 0 degrees of abduction (use towel roll)
- Initiate Manual Resistance ER Supine in Scapular Plane (light resistance)
- Initiate Prone Rowing to Neutral arm Position
- Initiate prone shoulder extension
- Initiate ER strengthening exercises
- Initiate Isotonic Elbow Flexion
- Continue use of ice as needed
- May use heat prior to ROM exercises
- May use pool for light AROM exercises
- Rhythmic stabilization exercises (flexion 45, 90, 125 degrees) (ER/IR)

Weeks 5 – 6:

- May use heat prior to exercises
- Continue AAROM and Stretching exercises
- Especially for movements that are not full
- Shoulder flexion
- ER at 90 degrees abduction
- Initiate Active ROM Exercises
- Shoulder Flexion Scapular Plane
- Shoulder Abduction
- Progress Isotonic Strengthening Exercise Program
- ER Tubing



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- Sidelying IR
- Prone Rowing
- Prone Horizontal Abduction (bent elbow)
- Biceps Curls (isotonics)

Weeks 5 – 6 (continued):

Precautions:

1. No Heavy Lifting of Objects
2. No excessive behind the back movements
3. No Supporting of Body Weight by Hands & Arms
4. No Sudden Jerking Motions

III. Phase III – Intermediate Phase (Weeks 7-14)

Goals: Full Active ROM (Week 8-10)

Maintain Full Passive ROM

Dynamic Shoulder Stability

Gradual Restoration of Shoulder Strength

Gradual Return to Functional Activities

Week 7:

- Continue Stretching & PROM (as needed to maintain full ROM)
- Continue Dynamic Stabilization Drills
- Progress Strengthening Program
- ER/IR Tubing
- ER Sidelying
- Lateral Raises*
- Full Can in Scapular Plane*
- Prone Rowing
- Prone Horizontal Abduction
- Prone Extension
- Elbow Flexion
- Elbow Extension

***Patient must be able to elevate arm without shoulder or scapular hiking** before initiating isotonics; if unable, continue glenohumeral joint exercises.

Week 8:

- Continue all exercise listed above
- If physician permits, may initiate Light functional activities



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Week 10:

- Continue all exercise listed above
- Progress to Fundamental Shoulder Exercises
- Therapist may initiate isotonic resistance (1 lb wt.) during flexion and abduction*
- *If non-painful normal motion is exhibited!

Weeks 11-14:

- Progress all exercises
- Continue ROM and flexibility exercises
- Progress strengthening program (increase 1 lb/10 days *non-painful)

IV. Phase IV – Advanced Strengthening Phase (Weeks 15 - 22)

Goals: Maintain Full Non-Painful ROM
Enhance Functional Use of UE
Improve Muscular Strengthen & Power
Gradual Return to Functional Activities

Week 15:

- Continue ROM & Stretching to maintain full ROM
- Self Capsular Stretches
- Progress Shoulder Strengthening Exercises
- Fundamental Shoulder Exercises
- Initiate Interval Golf Program (if appropriate)

Weeks 20- 22:

- Continue all exercises listed above
- Progress Golf Program to playing golf (if appropriate)
- Initiate Interval Tennis Program (if appropriate)
- May Initiate Swimming

V. Phase V – Return to Activity Phase (Weeks 23 - 36)

Goals: Gradual Return to Strenuous Work Activities
Gradual Return to Recreational Sport Activities

Week 23:

- Continue Fundamental Shoulder Exercise Program (at least 4 times weekly)
- Continue Stretching, if motion is tight
- Continue Progression to Sport Participation