

ROTATOR CUFF REPAIR - REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

Phase I: Immediate Postoperative - First 5 to 7 days after surgery, prior to starting PT

Goals:

- Protect the surgical site
- Ensure wound healing
- Diminish pain and inflammation
- Prevent stiffness and regain range of motion

Activities:

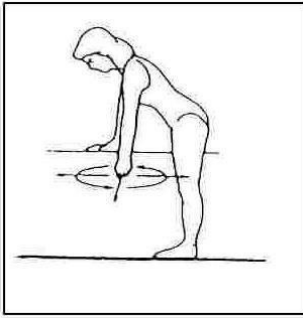
- Sling: Use your sling for 24-48 hours. Remove the sling 4 or 5 times a day to do pendulum exercises. You will need to sleep with your sling in place. It is often more comfortable to sleep in a recliner but you may sleep in a bed as tolerated.
- Use of the affected arm: You may use your hand on the affected arm in front of your body. It is all right for you to flex your arm at the elbow. Continue to move your elbow, wrist and hand to help circulation and motion.
- No lifting of objects over 5 lbs.
- No excessive shoulder extension.
- No excessive stretching or sudden movements.
- No supporting of body weight by hands.
- Continue to ice on a regular basis, at least 20 minutes at a time, 4 to 5 times per day.
- Your first office visit following surgery will be within 7-10 days. You will then get your referral for physical therapy at that time.

Exercises:

Perform the following exercises 7 days per week, 4 to 5 times per day.

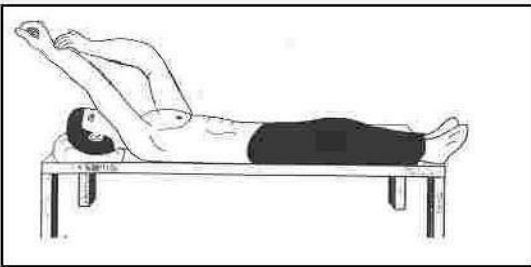
Pendulum exercise	1 to 2 sets	20 to 30 reps
Supine external rotation	1 to 2 sets	10 to 15 reps
Supine passive arm elevation	1 to 2 sets	5 to 10 reps
Scapular retraction	1 to 2 sets	5 to 10 reps
Shoulder shrug	1 to 2 sets	10 to 15 reps

See diagrams and description of exercises on the next page.



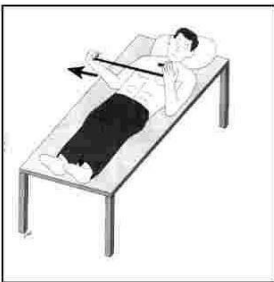
Pendulum exercise

Remove your sling, bend over at the waist and let the arm hang down. Using your body to initiate movement, swing the arm gently forward, backward, and in a circular motion.



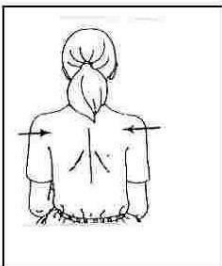
Supine passive forward elevation

Lie on your back. Hold the affected arm at the elbow with the opposite hand. Assisting with the opposite arm, lift the operated arm upward, as if to bring the arm overhead. Slowly lower the arm back to the bed.



Supine external rotation

Lie on your back. Keep the elbow of the operated arm against your side with the elbow bent 90 degrees. Using a cane or a long stick in the opposite hand, push against the hand of the operated arm so that the operated arm rotates outward. Hold for 10 seconds, relax and repeat. The amount of allowed external rotation will be specified after surgery.



Shoulder blade pinches

While standing, pinch shoulder blades backward and together.

Phase II: Intermediate Phase - Postoperative Weeks 1 to 6

At this point you should begin your formal physical therapy. The instructions that follow are to aid your therapist in maximizing the results of your surgery while still protecting the repair. Bring these instructions to your therapy appointment.

Your therapist will instruct you on how to perform the exercises below and give you a home exercise program. It is important that you stay within the limits demonstrated and that you perform your exercises daily. You should strive to do your home exercise program at least 3 to 4 times per day, every day. The success of your repair depends on your rehab.

Goals:

- Restore non-painful range of motion (ROM)
- Retard muscular atrophy
- Decrease pain/inflammation
- Improve postural awareness
- Minimize stress to healing structures
- Independent with activities of daily living (ADLs)
- Prevent muscular inhibition
- Wean from sling

Activities:

- Sling: You should now have weaned out of using your sling at home. It is a good idea, however, to continue to use your sling when you are away from your house to “send a signal” that others should not hit your shoulder.
- Continue to ice on a regular basis at least 20 minutes at a time, 4 to 5 times per day.
- Unless instructed otherwise, you should be okay to drive at this point.
- You can actively use your arm for daily living: bathing, dressing, driving, typing on a computer, eating and drinking.

Range of Motion:

- PROM (non-forceful flexion and abduction)
- Active assisted range of motion (AAROM)
- AROM
- Pendulum exercises
- Pulleys
- Cane exercises
- Self stretches

Strengthening:

- Isometrics: scapular musculature, deltoid, and rotator cuff as appropriate
- Isotonic: theraband internal and external rotation in 0 degrees abduction or with towel under arm

Once patient has pain-free full ROM, may progress to the following:

Strengthening exercises:

- Initiate isotonic program with dumbbells
- Strengthen shoulder musculature - isometric, isotonic, Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation (PNF)
- Strengthen scapulothoracic musculature - isometric, isotonic, PNF
- Initiate upper extremity endurance exercises

Manual treatment:

- Joint mobilization to improve/restore arthrokinematics if indicated
- Joint mobilization for pain modulation

Phase III: Active Strengthening Phase - Postoperative 6 Weeks and Beyond

Goals:

- Improve strength, power, and endurance
- Improve neuromuscular control
- Prepare athlete to begin to throw and perform similar overhead activities or other sport-specific activities

Criteria for progression to this phase:

- Full painless ROM
- No pain or tenderness on examination

Exercises:

- Continue dumbbell strengthening (rotator cuff and deltoid)
- Progress theraband exercises to 90/90 position for internal rotation and external rotation (slow/fast sets)
- Theraband exercises for scapulothoracic musculature and biceps
- Plyometrics for rotator cuff
- PNF diagonal patterns
- Isokinetics
- Continue endurance exercises (UBE)
- Diagonal patterns

Return to Sport/Activities:

- 12 weeks and beyond once adequate strength achieved for sports' specific criteria.