

# Physical Therapy Protocol

## Advanced Rotator Cuff Repair

### Patient Checklist

**Sling use:**

- Immobilization for 6 weeks coming out for PT exercises and showering

**Precautions:**

- AAROM: 4 weeks
- AROM: 6 weeks
- Advanced resistance: 12 weeks

**Questions?**

Orthopaedics:  
(603) 650-5133

Rehabilitation Medicine:  
(603) 650-3600

Phase I: 0-2 Weeks - Maximal Protection	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	16	20	24
Scapular Retraction-Depression	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Cervical ROM Exercises	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Elbow/Wrist/Hand ROM	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Gripping exercises	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Phase II/III: 2-6 Weeks - PROM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	16	20	24
External Rotation Limit			30	30	60	60	Continue PROM until full ROM is achieved							
Forward Elevation Limit			130	130	160	160								
Internal Rotation					No Limit - pain free and no behind the back				progress to behind the back as tolerated					
Pulleys			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Scapular retraction, elevation, depression			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Rotator cuff/deltoid isometrics					●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
AAROM flexion and ER through prescribed limits (supine cane, table bows, therapy ball, etc.)					●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Phase IV: 6-12 Weeks - AROM/Strengthening	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	16	20	24
IR in ADDuction						●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
ER in ADDuction						●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Scaption						●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Resistance band rows						●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Open chain proprioception						●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Bicep curls						●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Triceps Extensions						●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Scapular punches with a Plus						●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Prone T and Y exercises							●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Initial Closed Chain Stability									●	●	●	●	●	●
Initial Push-up Plus									●	●	●	●	●	●
ER in ABDuction									●	●	●	●	●	●
IR in ABDuction									●	●	●	●	●	●

Phase IV: 6-12 Weeks - Stretching	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	16	20	24
Corner stretch for ER								●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Towel Internal Rotation										●	●	●	●	●
Cross body stretch										●	●	●	●	●
Sleeper Stretch										●	●	●	●	●

Phase V: 12+ Weeks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	16	20	24
Return to unrestricted sports														●

Activities of Daily Living (ADL's)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	16	20	24
Driving						●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Lifting up to 5 lbs at side								●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Overhead Activity								●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Lifting greater than 5 lbs											●	●	●	●



# Physical Therapy Protocol

## Advanced Rotator Cuff Repair

### Phase I: 0-2 Weeks (Goal: Allow ROTATOR CUFF HEALING)

**Precautions:**

- Avoid exacerbating already inflamed shoulder
- PT: Single session at onset on home program
- Sling immobilization at all times (including sleep) except during showering and PT exercises

**Exercises**

- Cryotherapy (ice) 6 to 7 times daily
- Elbow, wrist and hand ROM and gripping exercises

### Phase II/III: 2-6 Weeks (Goal: Allow ROTATOR CUFF HEALING with P/AAROM)

**Precautions:**

- **Please review operative note for changes to post op protocol**
- No aggressive motion - PROM within ROM guidelines under supervision only in supine position
  - ✓ Forward elevation limit: **130 degrees** in the scapular plane without rotation
  - ✓ External rotation limit: **30 degrees** with arm at side (in 30 degrees of abduction)
  - ✓ Internal rotation limit: **No limit** with arm at side (in 30 degrees of abduction)
- No shoulder motion behind body

**Exercises:**

- Begin scapular strengthening - retraction, elevation, depression
- Add shoulder pulleys to home exercise program as tolerated

### Phase IV: 6-12 Weeks (Goal: Allow ROTATOR CUFF HEALING while GAINING FULL P/AAROM)

**Precautions:**

- Same as 2-4 week instructions, but increase motion limits (still simple PROM)
  - ✓ Forward elevation limit: **160 degrees** in the scapular plane without rotation
  - ✓ External rotation limit: **60 degrees** with arm at side (in 30 degrees of abduction)
  - ✓ Internal rotation limit: **No limit** with arm at side (in 30 degrees of abduction)
- Begin rotator cuff and deltoid isometrics in neutral
- Supine active assisted ER and elevation in scapular plane with cane

**Exercises:**

- Begin scapular strengthening - retraction, elevation, depression
- Add shoulder pulleys to home exercise program as tolerated

### Phase IV: 6-12 Weeks (Goal: FULL ACTIVE MOTION and BEGIN RESISTIVE EXERCISES)

**Precautions:**

- Gradual return to activities of daily living as symptoms allow

**Exercises:**

- GH joint mobilization and PROM when indicated with goal of full range of motion (no limits)
- Begin active ROM - Add light resistance as symptoms and strength allow
- Aquatic therapy: as indicated if incisions are fully healed
- Scapular stabilization
- Begin rotator cuff strengthening

### Phase V: 12+ Weeks (Goal: FULL ACTIVE MOTION and ADVANCED STRENGTHENING)

**Precautions:**

- Return to sport activities - as directed by surgeon

**Exercises:**

- Advance strengthening
- Begin functional progression for sport/activity-specific tasks
- Active ROM and strength should be within functional limit before discharge from PT

### Questions?

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