

# Physical Therapy Protocol

## Delayed Rotator Cuff Repair

### Patient Checklist

**Sling use:**

- Immobilization for 6 weeks coming out for showering

**Precautions:**

- AAROM: 8 weeks
- AROM: 10 weeks
- Advanced resistance: 16 weeks

**Questions?**

Orthopaedics:  
(603) 650-5133

Rehabilitation Medicine:  
(603) 650-3600

Phase I: 0-6 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: 6-10 Weeks - P/AAROM	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			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 III: 10-16 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										●	●	●	●	●
Punches with a Plus										●	●	●	●	●
Corner stretch for ER										●	●	●	●	●
Prone T and Y exercises											●	●	●	●
Initial Closed Chain Stability												●	●	●
Initial Push-up Plus												●	●	●
ER in ABDuction												●	●	●
IR in ABDuction												●	●	●
Towel Internal Rotation												●	●	●
Cross body stretch												●	●	●
Sleeper Stretch												●	●	●

Phase IV: 16+ 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

## Delayed Rotator Cuff Repair

### Phase I: 0-6 Weeks (Goal: Allow ROTATOR CUFF HEALING)

**Precautions:**

- Avoid exacerbating already inflamed shoulder
- Sling immobilization at all times (including sleep) except during showering

**Exercises:**

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

### Phase II: 6-10 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
- No shoulder motion behind body

■ **6 - 8 weeks:**

- ✓ 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)

■ **8 - 10 weeks:**

- ✓ 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)

**Exercises:**

**6 - 8 weeks:**

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

**8 - 10 weeks:**

- Begin rotator cuff and deltoid isometrics in neutral
- Supine active assisted ER and elevation in scapular plane with cane

### Phase III: 10-16 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 IV: 16+ 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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