



Post-operative protocol: Rotator Cuff Repair

Start formal physical therapy at 6 weeks

PHASE I: Protected ROM (6 weeks)

- Sling should be in place when not performing exercises.
- May start active scapular mobility exercises at 3 to 4 weeks – Must keep the shoulder musculature relaxed.
- Avoid all active and active assistive exercises until cleared by the surgeon. This includes pulley exercises, wand and supine assisted exercises.
- Initiate exercise program 3 times per day:
 - Immediate elbow, forearm and hand range of motion out of sling
 - Pendulum exercises
 - Supine active assist forward elevation to 90 degrees

PHASE II: Progressive ROM (6 to 12 weeks)

- May discontinue sling.
- Lifting restriction of 5 pounds should be reinforced with patient.
- Start AAROM and AROM – includes pulleys, wand and supine gravity assisted exercises. Emphasize all motions including IR behind the back at 10-12 weeks.
- Isolate and strengthen scapular stabilizers.
- Progress PROM and terminal capsular stretching of the shoulder as needed.
- Avoid AROM in positions of subacromial impingement.
- May start gentle rotator cuff strengthening at 8 weeks

PHASE III: (> 12 weeks)

- Discontinue formal lifting restrictions.
- Advance rotator cuff and shoulder strengthening (Theraband, dumbbells, Hughston's exercises, etc). Include home cuff strengthening program. Continue to emphasize scapular stabilizers.
- Equate active and passive range of motion. Encourage scapulohumeral mechanics during active shoulder motion.
- Simulate work/recreational activities as rotator cuff strength and endurance improve.