



ROTATOR CUFF REHABILITATION PROTOCOL



| PHASE OF REHABILITATION | | CONSERVATIVE TREATMENT (Stage I RC Tendinitis) | ARTHROSCOPIC DECOMPRESSION/ ACROMIOPLASTY | ARTHROSCOPY MINI-OPEN OR REPAIR | OPEN ROTATOR CUFF REPAIR |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| PHASE 1 POST OP (0-6 WEEKS) | GOALS | Pain Management for Acute Conditions | Full ROM | 75% ROM | Protect and Repair |
| | REHABILITATION GUIDE | -Start Exercises for ROM and Strengthening -Scapular Stabilization -PNF patterns -Neuromuscular control -Manual therapy as needed | -No sling -AAROM within pain tolerance -PROM- full range -Postural awareness -Gentle soft-tissue mobs -Submax isometrics | -1 st 2 weeks: sling (remove for light ADLs) -2 nd 2 weeks: AAROM to point of pain -3 rd week: start AROM, gentle PROM | -Sling x 6 weeks (remove for ADLs starting at Day 1) -Pendulum -AAROM below shoulder -Postural awareness |
| | PRECAUTIONS | Avoid impingement Avoid pain during exercises | Avoid overhead activity and heavy lifting Avoid impingement and pain during exercises | NO lifting or carrying NO strengthening | NO lifting or carrying NO strengthening NO active elevation |
| | CRITERIA FOR PROGRESSION TO PHASE 2 | Full ROM | Nearly full ROM | 75% ROM | -Passive fwd flexion to $\geq 125^\circ$ -Passive ER and IR in scapular plane to $\geq 75^\circ$ -Passive abduction to $\geq 90^\circ$ in scapular plane |
| PHASE 2 (6-12 WEEKS) | GOALS | Maintain ROM | Maintain nearly full ROM Progress strengthening | Maintain ROM Start strengthening | Protection and active motion Gradually restore full PROM (weeks 4-5) |
| | REHABILITATION GUIDE | Progress strengthening without impingement Progress to independent HEP | -Strengthening: start mid-range isometric \rightarrow progress to isotonic -Theraband, weights, pulleys -Scapular stabilization -joint mobilizations -PNF Patterns | -Progress AROM in all ranges -Strengthening: start mid-range isometric \rightarrow progress to isotonic -Theraband, weights, pulleys -Scapular setting -PNF Patterns -Joint mobilizations -High reps, low weight | -Initiate AAROM flexion in supine -Progress PROM until approx full ROM at 4-5 weeks -Gentle scapular and GHJ mobilization to restore ROM -Begin RC isometrics, scapular stabilization |
| | PRECAUTIONS | Avoid impingement | No overhead activity for 6 – 12 weeks | No overhead activity for 6 – 12 weeks | No lifting, supporting body weight on arms, sudden jerky movements or arm ergometer |
| | CRITERIA FOR PROGRESSION TO PHASE 3 | Progress to Phase 3 then 4 With Normal shoulder arthrokinematics in single then multiple planes Normal kinetic chain and force generation patterns | | Involved shoulder AROM grossly within normal limits | Elevation without shoulder hiking |



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| PHASE 3 (10-16 WEEKS) | GOALS | | Maintain ROM Progress strengthening without impingement Progress to independent HEP | Resistive exercises as tolerated Progress towards independent HEP | Early Strengthening and gradual restoration of shoulder strength, power, endurance Full AROM, maintain full PROM Dynamic shoulder stability |
| | REHABILITATION GUIDE | | Start overhead strengthening | Reinforce postural awareness, quality of exercise technique, and proper progression | -Strengthening: progress to isotonic (high reps, moderate resistance) -Theraband, weights, pulleys -Scapular stabilization -Neuromuscular control -Gradual return to functional activities |
| | PRECAUTIONS | | Avoid heavy lifting or jerky movements | | No lifting > 5 lbs, sudden lifting or pushing activities, no sudden movements or arm ergometer |
| | CRITERIA FOR PROGRESSION TO PHASE 4 | | Normal shoulder arthrokinematics in single then multiple planes Normal kinetic chain and force generation patterns | | Ability to tolerate progression to low level functional activities Demonstrated return of strength, dynamic shoulder stability and adequate strength |
| PHASE 4 3-6 MONTHS | | -RC Strengthening: progress scapular stabilization in weightbearing positions, mobile surfaces, plyometrics -Work Hardening | | | Resistive exercises as tolerated Progress towards independent HEP |
| 6-12 MONTHS | | -Maintain correct scapular positioning with all exercises -Continue HEP as per therapist: 12-15 reps, 3-4 sets, 2-3 days per week Athletes: 2 exercises per body part (change exercises each workout) -No pyramid UE exercises | | | -NO ER at end-range -Neutral Position -Continue HEP as per therapist: 12-15 reps, 3-4 sets, 2-3 days per week Athletes: 2 exercises per body part (change exercises each workout) -No pyramid UE exercises |