

ROTATOR CUFF REPAIR PROTOCOL

DR. ELRASHIDY – TRI-VALLEY ORTHOPEDICS

* This protocol is designed for the **average rotator cuff repair** (medium tear). Therapist and physician may advance or delay protocol depending on size of repair, tissue quality, etc.

PHASE 1: Week 0-6 (Passive Range of Motion Phase)

NO PULLEYS or AROM until 5-6 weeks Post-Op

No Strengthening or Isometrics until 10-12 weeks Post-Op

ROM LIMITS: No > 90° in 1st 3 weeks, no > 120° from 4-6 weeks, Full ROM after Week 6

- ♦ Sling for 6 weeks (unless otherwise noted by physician)
- ♦ PROM only, pendulums as tolerated
- ♦ AAROM elbow (***No Active Elbow Flexion** x 4 weeks in patients with **biceps tenodesis**)
- ♦ AROM of wrist, hand, and digits. Grip strength.
- ♦ Scapular clocks/retraction/posture/shrugs
- ♦ **Soft tissue modalities** to axilla, pec major/minor for pain/swelling

PHASE 2: Weeks 7-12 (Active Range Of Motion Phase)

- ♦ Discontinue sling (unless otherwise noted by physician)
- ♦ Begin and progress AAROM to AROM as tolerated
- ♦ **OK to begin pulleys at 6 weeks post-op**
- ♦ Start AAROM with wand (ER/IR)
- ♦ Gentle behind the back & hand behind head stretching
- ♦ **Table slides** in varying directions
- ♦ Progress to wall slides (70°-120°) – Flexion/Scaption
- ♦ Progress with scapular stabilization program: Prone scapular retraction/preset with arms by side
- ♦ Progress and check ER in ABD (i.e 60°, 90° abduction)
- ♦ Adducted horizontal flexion stretching

PHASE 3: Weeks 13-17 (Early Strengthening Phase)

- ♦ Start light shoulder strengthening
 - ♦ Initiate weights for RC strengthening as well as serratus, trap, bi/triceps
 - ♦ T-Band rows and ER @ side, T-Band mid and low trap
- ♦ Wall push with elbows @ side
- ♦ Independent shoulder stretches

PHASE 4: Week 17+ (Advanced Strengthening Phase)

- ♦ Start plyometrics
- ♦ Start soft toss, ball toss against wall (in flex and ABD)
- ♦ Rebounder ball toss with and without swiss ball
- ♦ Prone ER eccentric/concentric weighted ball
- ♦ Plank/Core, Isometric Hold in Plank Push-Up position
- ♦ Begin Sports-Specific drills at Week 19 (including long toss)

Week 25: RETURN TO SPORT & ALL ACTIVITY (AFTER CLEARANCE BY ORTHO)

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PHASE 1 (0-6 Weeks): Passive Range of Motion

- ◆ With all exercises, monitor symptoms before/after exercise. Avoid exercise that increases symptoms for > 10-15 minutes afterwards.
- ◆ For each exercise, aim for 2-3 sets, 10-20 reps, 1-2 times a day.

PRECAUTIONS:

- ◆ **NO PULLEYS** or **SHOULDER AROM** FOR INITIAL 5-6 WEEKS POST-OP
- ◆ **NO STRENGTHENING** or **ISOMETRICS** for 10-12 weeks
- ◆ **PROM (preferred in SUPINE position)**
- ◆ **ROM LIMITS:** No > 90° for 1st 3 weeks, no > 120° in weeks 4-6, Full ROM after Week 6

- 1) **Passive Supine Forward Elevation:** Lie on back, grasp wrist with non-op hand and passively raise operative arm overhead. Aim for 90° by 3 weeks. In week 4, progress to 120°. Full PROM at 6 weeks. Keep elbow bent & relaxed.



- 2) **Pendulum Exercise:** Hold onto a chair back with non-op hand and lean forward. Let operative arm hang down. Use body to passively swing arm: Forward, backward, side to side and in small circles. Repeat throughout day as tolerated



ADDITIONAL EXERCISES IN PHASE 1

- 3) **Passive Elbow Flexion/Extension:** Standing or sitting, use non-op hand to bend & straighten elbow.
- 4) **Shoulder Shrug:** Standing or sitting, shrug shoulders up, back and down in circular motion.
- 5) **Active ROM of Wrist/Digits, Grip Strength, Neck Range of Motion**

PHASE 2 (7-11 Weeks): Active Range of Motion

PRECAUTIONS:

- ◆ **Discontinue sling** after 5-6 weeks
- ◆ **Ok to begin Pulleys & AAROM/AROM**
- ◆ **NO STRENGTHENING** or **ISOMETRICS** until 10-12 weeks

- 1) **Active-assisted flexion with cane:** Lie on back, hold cane with both hands. Use non-op arm to help raise operative arm above head. Hold for 10-15 seconds & return to starting position



- 2) **Active-assisted external rotation with cane:** Lie on back, hold cane with both hands. Use non-op arm to gently push operative arm outward (ER).



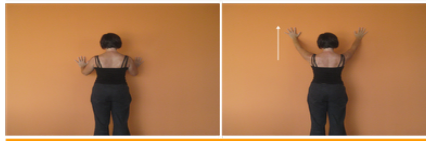
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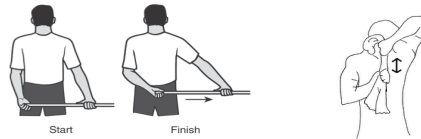
- 3) **Table slides:** Sit at table with hand on towel. Slide hand forward as far as you can. Return to starting position & repeat. Sit next to table sideways & repeat movement out to side.



- 4) **Wall slides:** Stand facing wall. Use fingers to walk/slide hand up the wall (can use a towel to help slide). Go as far as you can and return to starting position.



- 5) **ER in doorway:** Stand facing doorjam, place hand of operative shoulder on doorjam. Keep elbow at side while turning body away from operative shoulder.
- 6) **Posterior cuff stretch:** Reach across body, use non-op hand to pull elbow/arm across body.
- 7) **Hands behind head stretch:** Clasp hands behind head & stretch elbows backward.
- 8) **IR behind back:** Gently reach affected arm behind back. Try to get wrist to midline of body. Use other hand (with or without a cane/towel) to help slide hand up back.



- 9) **Active external rotation (NO Weight):** Lie supine or on non-op side. With elbow bent to 90°, rotate upper arm to raise hand toward the ceiling.
- 10) **Wall Climb Abduction:** Stand with shoulders flush with doorway. Use thumb & fingers to climb sideways up wall as high as possible.

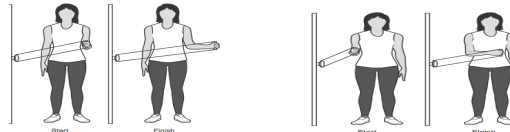
PHASE 3 (12-17 Weeks): Early Strengthening

PRECAUTIONS:

- ◆ Gradual strengthening (start with T-bands)
- ◆ Focus on restoring power + endurance
- ◆ No lifting > 5 lbs, pushing or overhead lifting

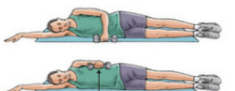
Week 12

- 1) **Theraband ER & IR:** Secure band. With elbow bent at side, pull band in towards stomach, then pull out with hand.



OTHER EXERCISES

- 1) **ER Side-lying**



Side-lying external rotation

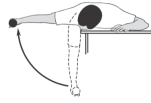
- 2) **Full can in scapular plane**



Scaption

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2) Prone rows, horizontal abduction & extension



Week 13-14: Initiate light functional activities as permitted

Week 15: Progress to fundamental shoulder exercises

PHASE 4 (17-25 Weeks): Advanced Strengthening

- ◆ Gradual return to **full sport & functional activity**
- ◆ Advance conditioning exercise & improve muscle strength and power
- ◆ Advance **proprioceptive & neuromuscular activity**
- ◆ Advance **to light sports** (golf chipping/putting, tennis ground strokes)
- ◆ **Week 20** – Initiate **Interval Return to Sport** Program

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT POINTS

PHASE 1 – Immediate Post-op (Weeks 0-6)

Gradual increase in PROM, decrease inflammation

Sling x 5-6 weeks: Remove with PT, exercise and for showering

No AROM, lifting or strengthening. Focus on PROM

Pendulums in 1st week, Passive Supine Forward Elevation from Week 2-6

PHASE 2 – Protection and AROM (Weeks 7-12)

Discontinue sling (in Week 5-6)

Gradually gain full PROM and begin AROM/AAROM

No lifting or strengthening until Week 10-12

PHASE 3 – Early strengthening (Weeks 13-17)

Obtain full AROM, start light strengthening

Begin work on dynamic shoulder stability

Gradual restoration of strength and endurance (No lifting > 5 lbs)

PHASE 4 - Advanced Strengthening (Weeks 17+ - 25)

Progression of strengthening and NM control

Light sports & initiate interval program by week 20

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