



## Small/Medium Rotator Cuff Repair Rehab Protocol

### Phase I - Immediate Post-Surgical Phase (Days 1-14)

#### *Goals*

- Maintain Integrity of the Repair
- Gradually increase passive ROM
- Diminish pain and inflammation
- Prevent muscular inhibition

#### *Day 1-6*

- Slight abduction brace
- Sleep in brace
- Pendulum exercises 4-8x/day (flexion, circles)
- Elbow/hand gripping & ROM exercises
- Cryotherapy for Pain and Inflammation
  - 15-20 minutes/hour

#### *Day 7-14*

- Continue Brace
- Continue Brace for sleep
- Continue Pendulum exercises
- Continue Elbow/hand gripping & ROM exercises
- Continue Cryotherapy

#### *Precautions:*

- Maintain arm in brace - REMOVE ONLY FOR EXERCISE
- No lifting of objects
- No excessive shoulder extension
- No excessive or aggressive stretching or sudden movements
- No supporting of body weight by hands
- Keep incision clean and dry

## Phase II - Protection Phase (Week 4-6)

### Goals:

- Allow healing of soft tissues
- Do not overstress healing tissue
- Gradually restore full passive ROM (week 4-6)
- Re- establish dynamic shoulder stability
- Decrease pain and inflammation

### Week 4

- Continue Brace - physician will determine when to discontinue
- PROM to tolerance
  - Flexion to 140-155 degrees
  - ER/IR at 90 degrees abduction to at least 45 degrees (ER to neutral only if subscapularis repair - until week 6)
- AAROM to tolerance
  - Flexion (continue use of arm support)
  - ER/IR in scapular plane
  - ER/IR at 90 degrees abduction (ER to neutral only if subscapularis repair - until week 6)
- Continue use of cryotherapy
- Continue all precautions
- No pulleys until week 6

### Week 5

- PROM
  - ER at 90 degrees abduction to 75-180 degrees
  - IR at 90 degrees abduction to 50-55 degrees
  - Flexion to 160-170 degrees
- Continue all exercises from above
- Initiate Isotonic elbow flexion
- Continue use of ice as needed
- May use heat prior to ROM exercises
- Rhythmic stabilization exercises (flexion 45, 90, 125 degrees) (ER/IR)

### Week 6

- PROM
  - ER at 90 degrees abduction to 90-100 degrees
  - IR at 90 degrees abduction to 50-55 degrees
  - Flexion to 170-180 degrees

- May use heat prior to exercises
- Continue AAROM and stretching exercises
  - Especially for directions that are not full
  - Shoulder flexion
  - ER at 90 degrees abduction
- Initiate active ROM exercises
  - Shoulder flexion in scapular plane
  - Shoulder abduction

#### *Precautions:*

- No Heavy lifting of objects
- No excessive behind the back movements
- No supporting of body weight by hands & arms
- No sudden jerking motions

### Phase III - Intermediate Phase (Weeks 7-14)

#### *Goals*

- Full active ROM (week 8-10)
- Maintain full PROM
- Dynamic Shoulder Stability
- Gradual Restoration of Shoulder strength & power
- Gradual return of functional activities

#### *Week 12*

- Strengthening Exercises
  - Tubing ER/IR
  - Prone Row at 30 degrees
  - Prone Row at 45 degrees
- Dynamic stabilization drills
  - Rhythmic stabilization drills
  - ER/IR in scapular plane
  - Flex/Ext at 100 and 125 degrees Flexion
- Initiate ER/IR strengthening using exercise tubing at 0 degrees of abduction (use towel roll)
- Initiate Manual resistance ER Supine in scapular plan(light resistance)
- Initiate Prone rowing to Neutral arm position
- Initiate Prone shoulder extension
- Initiate ER strengthening exercises (side-lying)

### *Week 7-14*

- PROM
  - Continue ROM & stretching to maintain full ROM
  - Self Capsular Stretching
- Fundamental shoulder exercises
- Initiate Interval Golf Program (if appropriate)
- Progress isotonic strengthening exercise program
  - ER/IR tubing
  - Side-lying IR
  - Prone rowing
  - Prone horizontal abduction (bent elbow)
  - Biceps curls

## Phase IV - Advanced Strengthening Phase (Week 15-22)

### *Goals*

- Maintain full non-painful ROM
- Enhance functional use of UE
- Improve muscular strength & power
- Gradual return to functional activities

### *Week 15-20*

- Continue ROM & stretching to maintain full ROM
- Progress shoulder strengthening exercises
- Fundamental shoulder exercises

### *Week 20-22*

- Continue all exercises listed above
- Progress Golf program to playing golf (if appropriate)
- Initiate Interval Tennis Program (if appropriate)
- May initiate swimming

## Phase V - Return to Activity Phase (Week 23-30)

### *Goals*

- Gradual return to strenuous work activities
- Gradual return to recreational sport activities

### *Week 23 and on*

- Continue fundamental shoulder exercise program (at least 4x/week)

- Continue stretching
- Continue Progression to Sport Participation

The above protocol may be modified at the discretion of the surgeon or therapist based upon patient's progress and surgical findings.