

ROTATOR CUFF REPAIR REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

Phase I – Immediate Post Surgical (Weeks 1-4):

Goals:

- Maintain/ protect integrity of repair
- Prevent tissue stiffness
- Diminish pain and inflammation
- Prevent muscular inhibition

Precautions:

- Maintain in abduction sling/brace, remove only for dressing
- No active range of motion (AROM) of shoulder
- No lifting anything other than a loaded fork or ½ full glass
- No shoulder motion behind back
- No sudden movements
- Keep incision clean and dry

Phase II – Protection/Active/Assistive Motion (Weeks 5-8):

Goals:

- Protect integrity of repair
- Do not overstress healing tissue
- Gradually restore ROM
- Decrease pain and inflammation

Precautions:

- No lifting
- No supporting of body weight by hands and arms
- No sudden jerking motions
- Avoid upper extremity bike (UBE) at all times

General:

- Discontinue use of sling as directed by physician
- Initiate active assistive range of motion (AAROM) Phase II exercises
- Continue general conditioning (walking, stationary bike-no weight on arms)
- May use heat prior to ROM exercises
- Ice after exercise

Exercises:

- Pendulum (as needed for pain control or warm up)
- Doorway forward flexion
- Horizontal adduction
- Towel internal rotation
- Doorway external rotation 0°/90°
- Scapular retractions

Phase III – Early Strengthening (Weeks 8-12):

Goals:

- Full active ROM (by week 12)
- Maintain full PROM
- Restore neuromuscular control
- Gradually restore strength and endurance

Precautions:

- No lifting of heavy objects
- No sudden lifting or pushing activities
- No overhead lifting

Exercises:

- Continue phase II stretching exercises
- Initiate neuromuscular control exercises (rhythmic stabilization, wall ball stabilization etc.)
- Initiate theraband rotator cuff exercises (flexion, extension, internal rotation, external rotation, abduction)
- Supine serratus punch
- Eccentric deltoids (supine or standing)
- Scapular retractions

Phase IV – Progressive Strengthening (Weeks 12-16):

Goals:

- Maintain full AROM
- Advance rotator cuff strength
- Establish dynamic functional stability
- Advance general conditioning exercises
- Gradual return to functional activities

Exercises:

Must be able to elevate arm without shoulder or scapular hiking

- Continue range of motion and stretching exercises to maintain full ROM
- Progress resistance of theraband rotator cuff exercises
- Add lat pull downs to the front and rows with theraband
- Progress proprioception exercises
- Add sidelying external rotation

Phase V – Return to Functional Activities (Months 5-6)

Goals:

- Maintain full AROM
- Advance rotator cuff strength
- Enhance dynamic functional stability
- Advance general conditioning exercises
- Return to functional activities

Exercises:

- Complete therabands
- Add lat pulls to the front, rows, biceps, triceps
- Progress general conditioning