



CONCORD ORTHOPAEDICS

ROTATOR CUFF

Rehab Protocol # 11
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3 PHASE PROGRAM:

1. Protect repair (4-6 weeks)
2. Begin Motion (6-12 weeks)**
3. Strengthening (3-6 months)

PROGRAM VARIABLES:

- Size of tear
- Age of patient
- Quality of cuff tissue
- Patients immobilized with abduction pillow or brace will have limitations/special needs beyond presented protocol
- In most cases would prefer to hold on active motion until 6 weeks after surgery (exception might include small tear in a young patient)

PHASE I - PROTECT REPAIR

WEEKS 0 – 2:

- Hand, wrist, elbow, cervical spine exercises
- Immobilizer at all times
- NSAID's, ice
- TID passive FF/ABD x 10 reps
- Therapy supervision only if patient unable to do
- Above independently

WEEKS 2 – 6:

- Passive ROM in directions that **shorten** repair
- Begin with forward flexion in supine position
- Abduction to 90 degrees
- Pool ideal to facilitate PROM

KEY POINTS:

- Typically start formal PT at 2-3 weeks post-op
- Emphasize frequent short sessions (4-5 for 10-15min)
- NO ACTIVE ABDUCTION in phase 1
- If patient in abduction pillow, wean to ultra sling at 4-5 weeks post-op

PHASE II - BEGIN MOTION

WEEKS 6 – 12:

- Pulley OK for flexion to 180 degrees /abduction to 90degrees
- Begin supine AAROM with therapist
- Flex/ext
- Abduction/adduction
- IR/ER (at 0 degrees ABD)
- Wean from shoulder immobilizer
- Opposite arm for passive stretching
- 8 week - submax isometrics for IR/ER
- 10-12 weeks – light theraband

KEY POINTS:

- Light active use of arm at 6-8 weeks okay
- Goal to reach FROM by 12 weeks
- Larger tears (deltoid repair) may delay active use until 12-16 weeks

PHASE III - STRENGTHENING**3 - 6 MONTHS:**

- Pulley for flexion and abduction to 180 degrees
- Scapular stabilization
- Start PREs for IR/ER at 0 degrees abduction
- Work up to IR/ER at 90 degrees abduction
- Begin PREs for supraspinatus SLOWLY
- Add resistance to exercises only if 30-50 reps without pain

IMPORTANT PATIENT REMINDERS:

- Weather ache for 1-2 years is common after RC repair
- Improvements in strength come slowly (takes 1 year to end result)
- Return of strength is variable with massive tears
- "Slump" with pain common at 3-4 months post-op
- Frequently 3-6 months before patients are content with result