



## Rotator Cuff Repair Rehab Protocol

### Physical Therapy Referral

Peter G. Noordsij, M.D.

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Precautions/notes:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Procedure: \_\_\_\_\_ Begin week of: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Three Phase Program

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

#### Program Variables

1. Size of tear
2. Age of patient
3. 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)

##### 0-2 weeks:

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

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## 2-6 weeks

- Passive ROM in directions that **shorten** repair
- Begin with forward flexion in supine position
- Abduction to 90 degrees
- Pendulum exercises OK at this point
- IR/ER begin at 0 degrees of abduction
- Pool ideal to facilitate PROM

### *Key Points:*

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

## PHASE II (begin motion)

### 6-12 weeks:

- Pulley OK for flexion to 180 degrees /abduction to 90 degrees
- Begin supine AAROM with therapist
  - ❖ Flexion/extension
  - ❖ Abduction/adduction
  - ❖ IR/ER (at 0 degrees ABD)
- Wean from shoulder immobilizer
- Opposite arm for passive stretching
- 8 week - sub max isometrics for IR/ER
- 10 ó 12 weeks ó light Thera-Band

### *Key points:*

- Light active use of are at 6-8 weeks okay
- Goal to reach FROM by 12 weeks
- Larger tears (deltoid repair) may delay active use until 12 ó 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 ó 50 reps are without pain

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## Important patient reminders

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

**Frequency:** 2x per week for 8 weeks

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Peter G. Noordsij, MD

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Date

\*e-mail with questions at [peter.noordsij@concordortho.com](mailto:peter.noordsij@concordortho.com) or call my secretary at 603-224-3368.