

Standard Rotator Cuff Repair Rehabilitation Protocol

Goals	Precautions/Restrictions	Treatment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect surgical site • Decrease pain and inflammation • PRICE principles • Minimize muscle atrophy • Initiate passive range of motion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No lifting of any object • Keep incision(s) clean and dry • No excessive shoulder extension • No excessive arm motions • Wear immobilizer with bolster except for hygiene and exercise performance • Do not force range of motion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active assisted range of motion of elbow, wrist and hand • Supine passive range of motion of shoulder <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ER as tolerated ○ Supine Forward Flexion to 140 ○ Plane of the Scapula to 90 • Scapular retraction • Week 2-3: Core training may be initiated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No stress to repair • Week 2-3: May begin stationary bike • Cryotherapy: 5-7 times per day • No pulley/canes until 6 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain integrity of repair • Progress PROM • Initiate AAROM to AROM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Full AROM at week 12 • Normal scapular mechanics at week 12 • Improve muscle activation • Improve motor control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sling worn for comfort beginning week 6, wean as tolerated • Immobilizer discontinued • Do not force motion • No weight bearing through involved shoulder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 6: Progress PROM in all planes as tolerated. • Avoid internal rotation until 6 weeks • Week 8: AAROM initiated and advanced to AROM as tolerated • Week 8: Shoulder isometrics may be initiated • Week 8: Rhythmic stabilization may be initiated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IR/ER at 45 degrees in scapular plane ○ Flexion at 100 degrees • Week 8: Core/LE training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No stress to repair ○ Single plane/multi joint exercises ○ Balance/proprioception • Continue with stationary bike <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Up to 30 minutes • Modalities as needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate RTC exercises • Initiate scapular stabilizer strengthening • Range of motion without compensation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not force motion • No weight bearing through involved shoulder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advancement to isotonic exercise program per tolerance in all planes, including multiplane exercises • Week 12: May initiate use of elliptical or stair stepper • Modalities as needed • Begin eccentrically resisted motion

This protocol is not meant to be prescriptive but a recommendation to guide the rehabilitation process. Each patient's progress may vary based on specifics to their injury and procedure.



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Weeks 16-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain integrity of repair • Address any remaining asymmetries in strength, endurance and movement patterns • Initiation of power development in athletes • 80% strength of involved to uninvolved side 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May begin loading through shoulder • Avoid aggravation of repair • Continue with low impact activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with multiplane strength and initiate multiplane stretching. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Avoid aggravation of repair • Advance proprioception exercises • Anaerobic and aerobic interval training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Low impact • Week 16: Core/LE training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Light loading through shoulder begins ○ Multi plane/multi joint exercises ○ Balance/proprioception • Week 20: Initiate plyometric activity • Week 20: Initiate interval sports program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Met strength and mobility goals ○ Begin throwing program, running program, golf program • Continue with core stability • Week 16: QuickDASH, FOTO PRO • Week 16: HHD/ isokinteic test
Weeks 24+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate return to sport progression • Initiate plyometric exercise progression • Initiate higher level impact activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on form and control during exercise performance • Use of appropriate work rest intervals • Assess tolerance to activity during, after and at 24 hours after activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low level sport specific activity, progressing to higher demand activity • Continue with Anaerobic and aerobic interval training • Continue with core stability • Multiple planes • Stability in all 3 planes of motion • Sport specific movements when able • Plyometric activities progressing from simple to complex, less load to more load • Week 24: QuickDASH, FOTO PRO • 1 year follow up: HHD/ isokinetic test

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