



## Rotator Cuff Repair Post-Operative Rehabilitation Protocol

### 0-4 Weeks

- **Shoulder Abduction Sling:** Wear at all times for 6 weeks, only remove for showering (maintain arm in sling position during shower).
- **Active Range of Motion (ROM):** Elbow, wrist, and hand only.
- **Passive ROM (ONLY):** Shoulder. NO active shoulder motion allowed.
- **Pendulum Exercises:** Begin as tolerated.
- **Supine Elevation:** Elevate arm in the scapular plane up to 140 degrees.
- **External Rotation:** Perform to tolerance with the arm at the side. Goal: Achieve at least 40° external rotation.
- **Scapular Stabilization:** Exercises in a side-lying position.
- **Deltoid Isometrics:** Begin in neutral position with submaximal effort as shoulder ROM improves.
- **No Active Motion:** Avoid pulley or cane exercises until 6 weeks post-op.

### 4-6 Weeks

- **Sling:** Discontinue abduction sling after 6 weeks post-op.
- **Active Assist ROM:** Begin active assistive ROM exercises, progressing to active ROM as tolerated.
- **Elevation and External Rotation:** Perform within tolerance in the scapular plane.
- **Internal Rotation:** Avoid until 6 weeks post-op.
- **Cuff Isometrics:** Start at 5 weeks with the arm at the side.

### 6-12 Weeks

- **Active Assist to Active ROM:** Continue to progress shoulder ROM as tolerated.
- **Scapular Plane Elevation and External Rotation:** Continue with progression based on tolerance.
- **Internal Rotation:** Introduce as tolerated.
- **Stretching:** Begin light stretching at the shoulder's end ranges.
- **Cuff Isometrics:** Continue with arm at the side.

- **Upper Body Ergometer:** Begin as tolerated for cardio conditioning.

### **3-12 Months**

- **ROM:** Gradually advance to full ROM as tolerated, using passive stretching at end ranges.
- **Strengthening:** Progress to strengthening exercises, including isometrics, resistance bands, and light weights (1-5 lbs). Perform 8-12 reps for 2-3 sets targeting the rotator cuff, deltoid, and scapular stabilizers.
  - Limit strengthening to 3x per week to prevent rotator cuff tendonitis.
- **Eccentric and Plyometric Exercises:** Begin eccentrically resisted motions, plyometric exercises (e.g., weighted ball toss), and proprioception training (e.g., Body Blade).
- **Sports Rehab:** Begin sport-specific rehabilitation at 4.5 months, including advanced conditioning.
- **Throwing:** Return to throwing activities at 6 months.
  - **Pitcher's Mound:** Return to throwing from the pitcher's mound at 9 months.
- **Collision Sports:** Return to contact or collision sports at 9 months.
- **Maximum Medical Improvement (MMI):** Typically achieved by 12 months post-op.

**Note:** Progression through these phases should be based on individual recovery, with all exercises adjusted as necessary under the guidance of your surgeon and physical therapist. Regular follow-ups with the surgical team are crucial to ensure optimal recovery