



Arthroscopic Rotator Cuff Repair-Conservative Protocol

Chris Schaefer, M.D.

Diagnosis: Right / Left RTC Repair _____

Date of Surgery: _____

Weeks 0-4 (Phase I):

- Goals: protect repair and educate patient about cuff repair precautions; decrease pain; start PROM
- Sling in neutral rotation (padded abduction sling)
- Codman/Pendulum exercises, elbow and wrist ROM
- Wrist and elbow ROM, grip strengthening

Weeks 4-6 (Phase II):

- D/C sling after 6 weeks per therapist instruction
- True PROM only! The rotator cuff tendon needs to heal back into the bone
- ROM goals: 140° FF/40° ER at side; ABD max 60-80° without rotation
- No strengthening of shoulder until 12 weeks post-op
- Grip strengthening
- No canes/pulleys until 6 weeks post-op, because these are active-assist exercises
- Heat before PT, ice after PT per therapist's discretion

Weeks 6-12 (Phase III):

- Begin AAROM → AROM as tolerated
- Goals: Same as above, but can increase as tolerated
- Light passive stretching at end ranges
- Begin scapular exercises, PRE's for large muscle groups (pecs, lats, etc)
- Initiate biceps and triceps strengthening with bands only
- Isometrics with arm at side beginning at 8 weeks

Months 3-12 (Phase IV):

- Advance to full ROM as tolerated with passive stretching at end ranges
- Advance strengthening as tolerated: isometrics → bands → light weights (1-5 lbs); 8-12 reps/2-3 sets per rotator cuff, deltoid, and scapular stabilizers
- Only do strengthening 3x/week to avoid rotator cuff tendonitis
- Begin eccentrically resisted motions, plyometrics (ex. Weighted ball toss), proprioception (es. body blade)
- Begin sports related rehab at 4 ½ months, including advanced conditioning
- Return to throwing at 6 months
- Throw from pitcher's mound at 9 months
- Collision sports at 9 months
- MMI is usually at 12 months post-op