

University Orthopedics, Inc.

## ROTATOR CUFF REPAIR

The following is a protocol for postoperative patients following rotator cuff repair. The primary goal of this protocol is to protect the repair while steadily progressing towards and ultimately achieving pre-injury level of activity. Please note this protocol is a guideline. Patients with additional surgery will progress at different rates. Achieving the criteria of each phase should be emphasized more than the approximate duration. If a patient should develop an increase in pain or swelling or decrease in motion at any time, activity should be decreased until problems are resolved.

### **PHASE I: 1-21 DAYS POSTOPERATIVE**

#### GOALS:

- Pain control
- AAROM Flexion and Abduction to 90 degrees

#### AMBULATION AND BRACE USE

Immobilizer with abductor pillow x 4-6 weeks – Even while sleeping  
– Place pillow under shoulder / arm while sleeping for comfort

#### EXERCISES:

Hand squeezing exercises  
Elbow and wrist active motion (AROM) with shoulder in neutral position at side  
Supported pendulum exercises  
Shoulder shrugs / scapular retraction without resistance  
PROM by therapist / Active assist motion (AAROM) w/ pulleys or supine w/ wand  
– Flexion to 90 degrees  
– Abduction to 90 degrees  
– ER to within 30 degrees of opposite shoulder  
Stationary bike (must wear immobilizer)  
Ice pack

#### GOALS:

- AAROM Flexion and Abduction to 150 degrees

#### AMBULATION AND BRACE USE:

Continue immobilizer x 4-6 weeks

#### EXERCISES:

Continue appropriate previous exercises  
Full pendulum exercises  
AAROM – Flexion and Abduction > 90 degrees (pulleys, supine wand)  
– ER as tolerated (wand, doorway stretch)  
– IR as tolerated if no subscapularis repair (wand behind back)  
1-2 Finger Isometrics x 6 (fist in box)

### **PHASE III: ~4-8 WEEKS POSTOPERATIVE**

#### GOALS:

- Full AROM

#### AMBULATION AND BRACE USE:

D/C Immobilizer

#### EXERCISES:

Continue appropriate previous exercises  
AROM, AAROM through full range  
Light Theraband ex x 6  
Standing rows with Theraband  
Prone scapular retraction exercises (without weights)  
Biceps and Triceps PREs with light weight  
UBE forwards and backwards with low resistance  
Stairmaster  
Treadmill – Walking progression program  
Pool walking / running – No UE resistive exercises

### **PHASE II: ~3-6 WEEKS POSTOPERATIVE**

### **PHASE IV: ~9-12 WEEKS POSTOPERATIVE**

GOALS:

- Normal rotator cuff strength
- 30 wall push-ups

EXERCISES:

Continue appropriate previous exercises  
PROM / mobilization as needed to regain full ROM  
Theraband ex with increased resistance as tolerated  
Seated row weight machine with light weight  
Body Blade  
Ball on wall (arcs, alphabet)  
BAPS on hands  
Ball toss with arm at side using light ball  
Push-up progression against wall  
Elliptical trainer  
Pool therapy – With UE resistance

**PHASE V: ~3-4 MONTHS POSTOPERATIVE**

GOALS:

- 30 chair push-ups
- Run 2 miles at easy pace

EXERCISES:

Continue appropriate previous exercises  
Push-up progression – Table to chair  
Ball toss overhead  
Fitter on hands  
Treadmill – Running progression program

**PHASE VI: ~4-6 MONTHS POSTOPERATIVE**

GOALS:

- Return to all activities

EXERCISES:

Continue appropriate previous exercises  
Weight training with light resistance (no overhead press or pull downs)  
Gravitrone – Pull-ups and dips  
Push-ups, regular  
Sit-ups  
Swimming  
Running progression to track  
Transition to home / gym program

***No contact sports until 9 months post-op***

\*\*This protocol is designed to be administered by a licensed physical therapist and/or certified athletic trainer. Please do not hesitate to contact our office should you have any questions concerning the rehabilitation process.