

SHOULDER

Arthroscopic Small/Medium Rotator Cuff Repair

Surgery Date: _____

Progressions are time and criterion-based, dependent on soft tissue healing, patient demographics and clinician evaluation. A review of the operative note and communication of any concerns with the referring physician is encouraged. Use of allowed visits should consider overall insurance limitations. When limitations are present, spread visits out over time to ensure that the patient can optimally complete rehab program with return to appropriate activities.

Weeks 0 – 2: Period of Protection | No Formal PT

Sling

- At all times, except for hygiene

Range of Motion

- No active or active-assisted shoulder motion during this protected phase — hand, wrist, and elbow motion only.

Exercise

- Pendulums are the one permitted shoulder motion during this phase (passive, gravity-assisted). Grip strengthening is allowed; no active or active-assisted shoulder motion and no shoulder strengthening exercises.

Phase I (Weeks 2 – 6)

Sling

- At all times, except for hygiene and exercises

Range of Motion

- PROM only, including FF, ER, and ABD (within a comfortable range)

Exercise

- Continue pendulums
- Begin scapular exercises including elevation with shrugs, depression, retraction, and protraction

Modalities

- Per therapist, including electrical stimulation, ultrasound, heat (before), ice (after)

Phase II (Weeks 6 – 8)

Sling

- Discontinue at 6 weeks

Range of Motion

- PROM (within a comfortable range)
- A/AROM per patient tolerance

Exercise

- Initiate isometrics

Phase III (Weeks 8 – 12)

Range of Motion

- Progress to full, painless ROM
- Begin AROM in all planes

Exercise

- Begin gentle PREs, isotonic exercises, PNF patterns
- Avoid substitution patterns
- Okay for active biceps strengthening at 8 weeks postoperatively

Phase IV (Weeks 12 – 24): Return to Activity

Exercise

- Advance resistance exercises
- Resisted scapular strengthening, rotator cuff strengthening, and deltoid strengthening
- Muscular endurance exercises
- Ensure thoracic and cervical mobility

Return to Activity

- Begin functional sport/work specific exercises at 4 months
- Return to throwing at 6 months
- Throw from pitcher's mound at 9 months
- Consider return to competitive sports, including contact sports by 6–9 months, if approved