

Hospital for Special Surgery  
HSS-Main Campus  
523 East 72<sup>nd</sup> St Ground Fl.  
New York, NY 10021



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148 39<sup>th</sup> St, 7<sup>th</sup> Fl.  
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**DR. GABRIELLA ODE**

Sports Medicine & Shoulder Surgery  
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**PHYSICAL THERAPY PROTOCOL  
ROTATOR CUFF REPAIR (MASSIVE or >3CM)**

<p><b>Procedure</b></p>	<p>Date of Surgery: _____  R L Arthroscopic Rotator Cuff Repair</p> <p>Additional Procedures:  <input type="checkbox"/> Biceps Tenodesis  <input type="checkbox"/> Superior Capsular Reconstruction  <input type="checkbox"/> _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PLAN</b></p> <p>Physical Therapy for R L B/L Shoulder  2-3x Per Week x 12 Weeks</p>
<p><b>General Guidelines</b></p>	<p>The intent of this protocol is to provide the physical therapist with a guideline/treatment protocol for the postoperative rehabilitation management for a patient who has undergone a <b>Rotator Cuff Repair</b>. It is not a substitute for a physical therapist's clinical decision making regarding the progression of a patient's postoperative rehabilitation based on the individual patient's physical exam/findings, progress, and/or the presence of postoperative complications. If the physical therapist requires assistance in the progression of a postoperative patient who has had the procedure the therapist should consult with the referring surgeon.</p> <p><b>Progression is both criteria-based and patient specific. Phases and time frames are designed to give the clinician a general sense of progression. Follow physician's modifications as prescribed</b></p>	

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**PHASE I  
(WEEKS 1-4)**

**GOALS:**

**Emphasize:**

- PROTECTING SURGICAL REPAIR
- Patient compliance with sling immobilization
- Promote healing: reduce pain, inflammation and swelling
- Independent home exercise program

**TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Elbow/ wrist full AROM, gripping exercises, modalities for pain and edema
- Scapular exercises
- Emphasize patient compliance to HEP and protection during ADLs

**DAY 1 TO 13:**

- Begin scapula musculature isometrics / sets; cervical ROM
- Patient education: posture, joint protection, positioning, hygiene, etc.
- Cryotherapy for pain and inflammation:
  - Day 1-2: as much as possible
  - Day 3-6: post activity, or for pain

**DAY 14 TO 28:**

- Continue use of brace / sling
- Start passive ROM to tolerance (at 14 days) in PT & HEP.
  - Flexion
  - Abduction in the scapular plane
- Continue Elbow, wrist, and finger AROM / resisted
- Cryotherapy as needed for pain control and inflammation

**PRECAUTIONS:**

- Sling at all times except exercises, resting in chair with with arm rests or showering
- No active range of motion (AROM) of Shoulder
- No lifting of objects
- No shoulder motion behind back
- No excessive stretching or sudden movements
- No supporting of body weight by hands
- Keep incision clean and dry

**MINIMUM CRITERIA FOR ADVANCEMENT:**

Minimal pain or inflammation

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**PHASE II  
(WEEKS 5-8)**

**GOALS:**

- Allow healing of soft tissue
- Do not overstress healing tissue
- Gradually restore full passive ROM (week 5-8)
- Decrease pain and inflammation

**TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Continue Phase 1
- Codman's, wand exercises
- All ROM is passive
- Core exercises
- Range of Motion
- FF – 0-90° progressing to full by week 8
- ER – 0-30° progressing to full by week 8
- If SUBSCAP repaired do not start progress past 30° until after week 6.
- Initiate prone rowing to neutral arm position
- Continue cryotherapy as needed
- May use heat prior to ROM exercises
- May use pool (aquatherapy) for light ROM exercises
- Ice after exercise

**PRECAUTIONS:**

- Sling at all times through Week 4 except exercises, resting in chair with arm rests or showering.
- May wean sling to only for sleep and out of house weeks 4-6. Okay to remove abduction pillow after week 4.
- May **d/c sling after week 6** with MD permission.
- No pendulums until after week 6
- No lifting
- No supporting of body weight by hands and arms
- No excessive behind the back movements
- No sudden jerking motions

**MINIMUM CRITERIA FOR ADVANCEMENT:**

- Full AROM

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**PHASE III  
(WEEKS 9 -12)**

**GOALS:**

- Full AROM (week 9-12)
- Maintain Full PROM
- Dynamic shoulder stability
- Gradual restoration of shoulder strength, power, and endurance
- Optimize neuromuscular control
- Gradual return to functional activities
- Avoiding excessive passive stretching
- Avoiding inflammation of rotator cuff
- Establishing normal strength base and rotator cuff strength base

**TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- PROM in all directions – progress to full
- AAROM and AROM – advance as tolerated
- Continue Phase 2 as needed
- FF in scapular plane (supine and standing)
- Initiate strengthening program - light isometric exercises
  - Side-lying ER/ IR with therabands/sport cord/tubing
  - Lateral Raises\*
  - Full Can in scapular plane\* (avoid empty can abduct exercises all times)
  - Prone Rowing/Horizontal Abduction/Extension
  - Elbow Flexion/Extension

*\*Patient must be able to elevate arm without shoulder or scapular hiking before initiating isotonic; if unable, continue glenohumeral joint exercises*

**PRECAUTIONS:**

- No heavy lifting of objects ( $\leq$  5 lbs.)
- No sudden lifting or pushing activities
- No sudden jerking motions

**MINIMUM CRITERIA FOR ADVANCEMENT:**

- Able to tolerate the progression to low-level functional activities
- Demonstrates return of strength / dynamic shoulder stability
- Re-establish dynamic shoulder stability
- Demonstrates adequate strength and dynamic stability for progression to higher demanding work/sport specific activities

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<p><b>PHASE IV (WEEKS 13-16)</b></p>	<p><b>GOALS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full and painless ROM</li> <li>• Progressive cuff strengthening</li> </ul> <p><b>TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue Phase 3 as needed</li> <li>• Full and painless ROM</li> <li>• Side-lying posterior capsule stretch</li> <li>• Progressive cuff strengthening</li> <li>• Advance to more dynamic strengthening (shrugs, bicep curls, rows, etc.)</li> <li>• Scapular stabilization</li> <li>• Proprioceptive exercises</li> </ul>	<p><b>MINIMUM CRITERIA FOR ADVANCEMENT:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Able to tolerate progression w/ painless ROM</li> <li>▪ Demonstrates return of strength / dynamic shoulder stability</li> <li>▪ Demonstrates adequate strength and dynamic stability for progression to higher demanding work/sport specific activities</li> </ul>
<p><b>PHASE V (WEEKS 17+)</b></p>	<p><b>GOALS:</b></p> <p><b>Week 17-20</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full and painless ROM</li> <li>• Continue Phase 4 as needed</li> <li>• Light plyometrics</li> <li>• Sport specific/functional</li> </ul> <p><b>Week 20+</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gradual return to strenuous work activities</li> <li>• Gradual return to recreational activities</li> <li>• Gradual return to sport activities</li> </ul> <p><b>TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue Phase 4 as needed</li> </ul>	<p><b>CRITERIA FOR DISCHARGE:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pain free Sport or Activity specific program</li> <li>• Isokinetic IE/ER strength at least equal to unaffected side</li> <li>• &gt; 66% Isokinetic ER/IR strength ratio</li> <li>• Independent Home Exercise Program</li> <li>• Independent Sport or Activity specific program</li> </ul>

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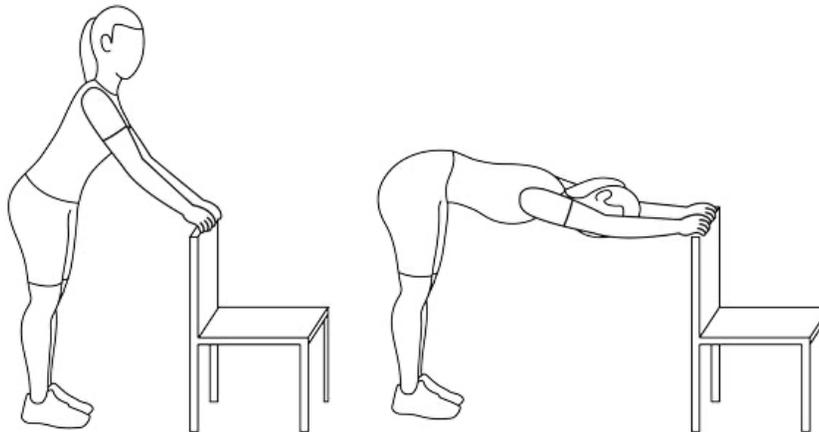
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- Continue ROM and self-capsular stretching for ROM maintenance
- Continue progression of strengthening
- Advance proprioceptive, neuromuscular activities

### HOME EXERCISES (Starting at Day 14):

#### Home Stretching Exercises #1 *Shoulder Flexion Stretch*

- Stand behind a chair with both hands on the back of the chair.
- Back up a few steps and bend forward until you feel a stretch in front of your shoulders. Keep your back flat and your elbows softly bent.
- Hold for 10 seconds and then return to your starting position.
- **Frequency:** 1 set of 10 reps. 3 times a day; 6-7 days a week



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**Home Stretching Exercises  
#2**

Supine Passive Assisted  
Elevation

- Start by laying comfortably on your back.
- Use the well arm to support the operative arm by grabbing firmly at the elbow.
- Gently lift arm up as far as comfortable.
- Hold 5 seconds then lower back to your starting position. When lowering, gently push the operated arm into the other hand to reduce pain.
- Gradually increased range of motion. If more comfortable, you may grab the operative arm at the wrist as your range of motion increases (as shown in the 2<sup>nd</sup> picture).
- **Frequency:** 1 set of 10 reps. 3 times a day; 6-7 days a week

