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PHYSICAL THERAPY PROTOCOL
ROTATOR CUFF REPAIR (SMALL or <3CM)

Procedure	**Date of Surgery:** _____ **R L** Arthroscopic Rotator Cuff Repair **Additional Procedures:** **[ ] Biceps Tenodesis [ ]** _____	**PLAN** **Physical Therapy for R L B/L** Shoulder 2x Per Week x 12 Weeks
General Guidelines	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 **Rotator Cuff Repair**. 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. **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**	
PHASE 1 (WEEKS 1-2)	**GOALS:** **Emphasize:** • PROTECTING SURGICAL REPAIR • Patient compliance with sling immobilization – Sling at all times except for exercises and showering • Promote healing: reduce pain, inflammation and swelling • Independent home exercise program **TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:** • Elbow/ wrist full AROM, gripping exercises, modalities for pain and edema prn • No shoulder motion • Begin scapula musculature isometrics /sets; cervical ROM • Patient education: posture, joint protection, positioning, hygiene, etc.	Please **see page 5 for patient home exercises** that start on **post-op day 14.**

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	• Cryotherapy for pain and inflammation:
	  ○ Day 1-2: as much as possible
	  ○ Day 3-6: post activity, or for pain	

PHASE II (WEEKS 3-6)	**GOALS:**
	Emphasize:
	• PROTECTING SURGICAL REPAIR
	• Independent home exercise program
	• Keep incision clean and dry
	
	TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:
	• Emphasize patient compliance to HEP & protection during ADLs
	• Codman exercises
	• Core exercises
	• 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.
	• May use heat prior to ROM exercises
	
	RANGE OF MOTION
	• All shoulder ROM done supine and passively initially, progressing to upright. ROM exercises begin on a case by case basis; never earlier than 2 weeks postop.
	• FF – 0-90° progressing to full by week 6
	• ER – 0-30° progressing to full by week 6
	  ○ If SUBSCAP repaired do not progress past 30° during this phase.
		PRECAUTIONS:
		• Sling at all times until after **wk 3** except exercises, resting in chair with arm rests or showering.
		• Sling for sleep/outside of home until wk 4
		• D/c sling completely after wk 4 w/ MD permission.
		• Okay to remove abduction pillow after wk 3
		• No pendulums until after wk 6
		• No active ROM of shoulder
		• No lifting of objects
		• No shoulder motion behind back
		• No excessive stretching or sudden movements
		• No supporting of body weight by hands
		
		MINIMUM CRITERIA FOR ADVANCEMENT:
		Minimal pain or inflammation with range of motion

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PHASE III (WEEKS 7-9)	**GOALS:** • Restore full AROM • Do not overstress healing tissue • Decrease pain and inflammation **TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:** • PROM in all directions – progress to full • AAROM and AROM – advance as tolerated • Continue Phase 2 as needed • Strengthening – isometric exercises at neutral • FF in scapular plane • Side lying ER	**PRECAUTIONS:** • 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
PHASE IV (WEEKS 10 -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	**PRECAUTIONS:** • No heavy lifting of objects (≤ 5 lbs.) • No sudden lifting or pushing activities • No sudden jerking motions

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	TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:
	• Continue Phase 3 as needed
	• Side-lying posterior capsule stretch
	• Scapular stabilization
	• Proprioceptive exercises
	• Progressive cuff strengthening
	• Advance to more dynamic strengthening (shrugs, bicep curls, rows, etc.) - light isometric exercises
	  • Side-lying ER/ IR with therabands/sport cord/tubing
	  • Lateral Raises*
	  • Full Can in Scapular Plane* (avoid empty can abduction exercises at all times)
	  • Prone Rowing/Horizontal Abduction/Extension
	  • Elbow Flexion/Extension
	  **Patient must be able to elevate arm without shoulder or scapular hiking before initiating isotonics; if unable, continue glenohumeral joint exercises*
		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.

PHASE V (WEEKS 13+)	**GOALS:** • Full and painless ROM • Progressive cuff strengthening **TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:** • Continue Phase 4 as needed • Light plyometrics • Sport specific/functional	**CRITERIA FOR DISCHARGE:** • Pain free Sport or Activity specific program • Isokinetic IE/ER strength at least equal to unaffected side • > 66% Isokinetic ER/IR strength ratio • Independent Home Exercise Program • Independent Sport or Activity specific program

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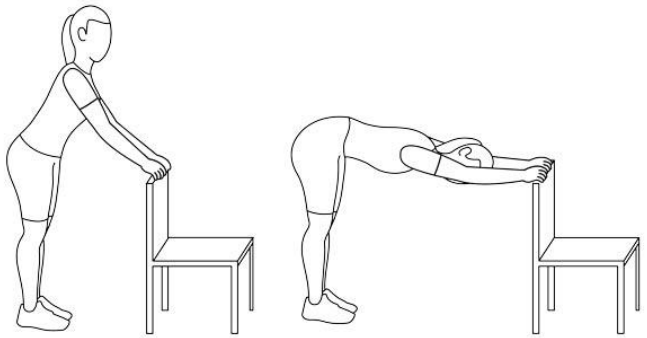
HOME EXERCISES (Start on Day 14):

Home Stretching Exercises #1 *Table Slides*	• Sit in a sturdy chair at a table, resting the hand/forearm of the injured shoulder on a towel, sheet, or paper plate to aid sliding. • Lean forward slowly, sliding your hand straight ahead to stretch the shoulder, allowing your head/trunk to lower slightly. • **Frequency**: 1 set of 10 reps. 2 times a day; 6-7 days a week 
Home Stretching Exercises #2 *Shoulder Flexion Stretch*	• Stand behind a chair or at a countertop 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. 2 times a day; 6-7 days a week 

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Home Stretching Exercises #3 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 wrist as your range of motion increases (as shown in the left picture). • **Frequency**: 1 set of 10 reps. 2 times a day; 6-7 days a week