



Arthroscopic Rotator Cuff Rehabilitation –Small / Medium Repair

Preoperative: Must restore at least 80% passive range of motion prior to surgery

Phase I: Immediate postoperative phase (days 1–7)

Goals

- Control pain and swelling
- Begin gentle passive motion

Brace/Modalities

- UltraSling worn at all times except for bathing and prescribed exercises
- Cryotherapy 4 times per day for 10 minutes each

Exercises

- Gentle pendulum exercises performed 4 times per day for 20 minutes each
- Elbow and wrist range of motion as tolerated
- Grip/squeeze exercises

Phase II: Early Phase (weeks 2–6)

Goals

- **Passive** range of motion approximately 70% of normal in all planes **at 6 weeks**
- **No Active ROM**

Brace/Modalities

- Continue UltraSling at all times until 4 weeks then discontinue

Exercises

- Gentle (supine preferred) passive range of motion exercises in all planes: flexion, extension, abduction, external rotation, internal rotation (unless instructed otherwise); each stretch with mild to moderate pressure and held for 20 - 25 seconds
- Periscapular isometrics, gentle elbow and wrist strengthening exercises
- Independent home exercises above, 4 times / day

Phase III: Motion Phase (weeks 7–12 weeks)

Goals

- Restore 90% passive ROM by end of week 12
- Improved rotator cuff strength (**not to begin before postop week 10**)

Modalities

Modalities as beneficial

Exercises

- Continue passive ROM exercises 4 times per day
- Begin gentle active ROM at week 10 (**No lifting of any weight**)

- Begin light isometrics and resistive band exercises for flexion, extension, external rotation, and internal rotation at 10 weeks
- Continue scapular strengthening

Phase IV: Progression Phase (weeks 13–24 weeks)

Goals

- Improve rotator cuff and scapular strength
- Progress to independent home program

Exercises

- Continue rotator cuff and scapular strengthening exercises with light but progressive resistance
- Maintain ROM

Shoulder Function

- Begin light functional activities at 16 weeks, i.e. golf chipping and pitching

Phase V: Return to Function (weeks 25–36 weeks)

Goals:

- **May be limited** and determined in part by the quality of rotator cuff tissue and size / extent of the tear (Dr. Angelo will counsel)
- Function progresses commensurate with overall shoulder strength and mobility

Criteria:

- Minimal pain
- Full or nearly full range of motion
- Rotator cuff and scapular strengthening within one grade of opposite shoulder
- Clearance by Dr. Angelo