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Total Shoulder Replacement Rehabilitation

Preoperative: Optimize passive range of motion

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

Goals

- Control pain and swelling
- Begin to regain passive shoulder motion
- Active motion of the elbow, wrist, and hand

Brace / Modalities

- Sling worn for comfort; may discard after 1 week
- Cryotherapy 4 times per day for 20 minutes each

Exercises

- Pendulum exercises (gradually widening) frequently throughout the day
- Gentle, progressive shoulder stretching (supine) for shoulder flexion, extension, abduction 5 times / day; each stretch held with mild to moderate pressure for 20 - 25 seconds; **avoid external rotation stretching!!**
- Elbow and wrist range of motion as tolerated
- Grip / hand squeeze exercises

Phase II: Early Phase (weeks 2–6)

Goals

- Passive range of motion approximately 75-85% of normal in all planes **at 6 weeks** except external rotation – **limit ER to 45° the first 6 weeks!**
- Active range of shoulder motion as tolerated – **avoid active internal rotation!**

Exercises

- Continue (supine preferred) passive range of motion exercises 5 times / day; gentle passive external rotation stretching
- May begin to use pulley exercises as tolerated
- Begin active shoulder range of motion at 3 weeks
- Periscapular and cuff isometrics begin at 2 weeks; gentle elbow and wrist strengthening exercises

Phase III: Intermediate Phase (weeks 7–10 weeks)

Goals

- Restore as much shoulder range of motion as possible except external rotation – limit ER to 60°

Exercises

- Continue passive ROM exercises 4 times per day
- Begin progressive, resisted strengthening exercises in all planes – limit to 5 # resistance first 10 weeks (limit internal rotation to isometrics)
- Continue scapular strengthening

Phase IV: Advanced Phase (weeks 11–16 weeks)**Goals**

- Gradual improvement in rotator cuff and scapular strength

Exercises

- Continue progressive shoulder strengthening exercises
- Maintain ROM

Shoulder Function

- Begin light functional activities at 12 weeks, i.e. golf chipping and pitching

Phase V: Return to Normal Function (weeks 17-20 weeks)**Goals:**

- Function progresses commensurate with overall shoulder strength and mobility
- Return to normal activities (hobbies, sport, gardening, golf – use caution with aggressive tennis forehand shots)

Criteria:

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