



TEXAS SPORTS & JOINT CLINIC

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Postoperative Rotator Cuff Repair Protocol

First 7-10 days

- 1) Keep sling on at all times except when taking a sponge bath, stretching the elbow a few times/day will have a CPM chair.
- 2) Change dressing on second day after surgery and replace with dry dressing or bandaids. Leave tape/steristrips on the skin and do not remove unless they fall off on their own.
- 3) Keep wound/dressings dry. No showers for 7 days and no baths for three weeks.
- 4) Use ice pack/cryocuff at least 3 times each day for 15 minutes each time to reduce swelling and pain
- 5) Pain medication and muscle relaxant will be prescribed.

First six weeks

- 1) PT will be prescribed after the first clinic visit.
- 2) May remove sling when sitting under controlled conditions at home. Must wear sling at night and in public places for total of 4 weeks.
- 3) May remove abduction pillow of sling if uncomfortable.
- 4) If a biceps tenodesis or tenotomy has been done, you cannot actively flex the elbow for the first 6 weeks.

PT goals:

- 1) PROM only: FF 140/ER 40/Ab 70
- 2) Elbow active and passive motion (only passive flexion if biceps procedure done)
- 3) Modalities as needed for pain, edema.

6 weeks to 3 months

- 1) Advance to active-assist then AROM
- 2) No strengthening of rotator cuff
- 3) Strengthen scapular stabilizers
- 4) Aquatherapy can be very helpful

PT goals:

- 1) Advance PROM to FF 160/ER 50/AB90 then AB/ER of 90/90 and IR last
- 2) Once PROM goals met, advance to active-assist
- 3) Once active-assist achieved, advance to AROM
- 4) Scapular stabilizer strengthening

3 months to 6 months

- 1) Strengthening
- 2) Fine tune ROM

PT goals:

- 1) Fine tune ROM
- 2) Rotator cuff strengthening
- 3) Start with closed chain/isometrics
- 4) Advance to open chain (therabands)
- 5) Advance to dumbbells
- 6) Continue scapular stabilizer strengthening

Additional instructions:

Driving:

No driving while in a sling for the first four weeks. After four weeks, may drive short distances to store.
Avoid highways, heavy traffic If right arm is operative side, cannot drive standard transmission for 2 months

Work:

May return to sedentary desk work when no longer using narcotics regularly. No heavy labor for minimum 6 months

Frequency of PT:

- For weeks 1-6 (10 visits): supervised 2x/week.
For weeks 6-12 (12 visits): supervised 2x/week. Perform exercises on your own 3-5 days/week
For months 3-4 (8 visits): supervised 2x/week. Perform exercises on your own 3-5 days/week
For months 4-5 (4 visits): supervised 1x/week. Perform exercises on your own 3-5 days/week
After 5 months: no supervised PT. Continue exercises on your own.