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POST-OPERATIVE REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

Rotator Cuff Repair

1-4 Weeks PROTECT THE REPAIR

- Sling Immobilization; active ROM elbow, wrist and hand; true passive (ONLY) ROM shoulder. NO ACTIVE MOTION.
- Pendulums; supine elevation in scapular plane = 140°
- External Rotation to tolerance with arm at side. (Emphasize ER, minimum goal 40°)
- Scapular Stabilization exercises (side lying); deltoid isometrics in neutral (submaximal) as ROM improves
- No Pulley/Canes until 6 weeks post-op (these are active motions)
- If biceps tenodesis was performed, no resisted elbow flexion until 8 weeks

GOALS Protect the repair

4-6 Weeks PROGRESS MOTION

- Discontinue sling use; begin active assist ROM and advance to active as tolerated
- Elevation in scapular plane and external rotation as tolerated; no internal rotation or behind back until 6wks.
- Begin Cuff Isometrics at 6wks with arm at the side
- If biceps tenodesis was performed, no resisted elbow flexion until 8 weeks

GOALS PROM toward full

6-12 Weeks ACTIVE MOTION

- Active Assist to Active ROM Shoulder As Tolerated; elevation in scapular plane and external rotation to tolerance
- Begin internal rotation as tolerated; light stretching at end ranges; cuff isometrics with the arm at the side
- Upper Body Ergometer; if biceps tenodesis was performed, no resisted elbow flexion until 8 weeks

GOALS Full AROM, normal rhythm



3–12 Months STRENGTHEN & RETURN

- Advance to full ROM as tolerated with passive stretching at end ranges
- Advance strengthening as tolerated: isometrics → bands → light weights (1–5 lbs); 8–12 reps/2–3 sets per rotator cuff, deltoid, and scapular stabilizers
- Only do strengthening 3x/week to avoid rotator cuff tendonitis
- Begin eccentrically resisted motions, plyometrics (ex. Weighted ball toss), proprioception (es. body blade)
- Begin sports related rehab at 4 ½ months, including advanced conditioning Return to throwing at 6 months
- Throw from pitcher's mound at 9 months; collision sports at 9 months; MMI is usually at 12 months post-op

GOALS Overhead when cleared

Return to Sport & Discharge Criteria

- Full pain-free AROM with normal scapulohumeral rhythm
- Cuff and periscapular strength $\geq 90\%$ of opposite side
- Overhead sport / heavy labor only when cleared by Dr. Kelly

Time frames are guidelines — progress when phase goals are met, per Dr. Kelly and the treating therapist.