



Arthroscopic Subacromial Decompression Protocol

T.J. Panek, MD

- 6-8 visits over 3-4 months
- Emphasis is on AAROM and a high repetition, low weight free weight program
- Address posterior capsular tightness if indicated
- Address scapular mal-positioning if indicated
- Minimal to no pain during or after exercises, although fatigue is OK
- No passive ROM (PROM) or pulleys unless specifically indicated by the physician
- For patients who underwent arthroscopic distal clavicle excision, avoid internal rotation behind the back and cross-body adduction for 4 weeks post – operatively

MODALITIES:

- Ice following exercises
- No phonophoresis/iontophoresis
- No ultrasound
- Transfrictional massage for tendonitis (only if indicated by physician)
- Soft-tissue techniques (only if indicated by physician)

STAGE I (0-4 WEEKS):

- 4-5 visits in 4 weeks
- Patient can wear sling 1-2 days
- Ice following exercises as needed
 - Stretching/ROM (2x/day) -if limited
 - Codman's (pendulum) exercises to warm up
 - Four corner stretch
 - Sleeper Stretch
 - AAROM (wand exercises) in all movements -full ROM as tolerated - accept minimal pain only!
 - Manual technique to restore capsular length if necessary and indicated by physician
 - Strengthening -all exercises painfree ROM only (3x/week max)
 - Supine rotator cuff program

- Start against gravity and gradually progress with weights
- Progress to isotonic when elevation against gravity > 80 deg
- Isotonic exercises - strengthening exercises #1-8 as tolerated
 - Perform with free weights only (No theraband - except IR #6)
 - Repetitions -20-50 reps before adding/progressing in weight
 - Start against gravity without weight; progress as tolerated to:
 - 2 oz. (dinner knife)
 - 4 oz. (tuna can)
 - 8 oz. (soup can)
 - 1lb. weight
 - 2lbs.weight, etc.
 - Scapular stabilization exercises # 1-7
- Goals:
 - Full AROM at 4 weeks
 - Avoid increasing pain or inflammation
 - Encourage scar mobilization

STAGE II (5+ WEEKS):

- 2-3 visits over 2 months
- Emphasis is on independent home rehabilitation
 - Home strengthening program:
 - Progress of rotator cuff free weight program independently
 - Stretching/ROM
 - Strengthening: 3-4 days/week (pain free!)
 - 1-3 lbs x 25 reps maximum weight by 3 months post-op
 - Scapular stabilization exercises #1-8
 - Goals:
 - Return to sports or work at 1-3 months post-op without restrictions
 - Minimal to no pain during or after exercise

STAGEIII: MAINTENANCE:

- Continuation of isotonic strengthening exercises should be encouraged 1- 2x/week for 3-6 months.

This protocol provides you with general guidelines for the rehabilitation of a patient following an arthroscopic subacromial decompression (SAD). The physician will make specific changes to the program as appropriate for an individual patient.