

Rotator Cuff Repair Post Operative Protocol

This protocol provides you with general guidelines for initial stage and progression of rehabilitation according to specified time frames, related tissue tolerance and directional preference of movement. Specific changes in the program will be made by the physician as appropriate for the individual patient.

****Please fax initial assessment and subsequent progress notes directly to MOSMI at 952-944-0460.***

Phase I: Immediate Post-operative to 4 weeks

- Abduction support
 - For all significant full-thickness rotator cuff tears, an abduction support/ultra sling is used for 4 weeks post-op.
 - The orthosis may be removed for up to an hour at a time, as needed for bathing and early pendulum exercises.
- Patients frequently sleep better in a recliner or propped up in a semi-sitting position with pillows for 7-10 days following surgery.
- First post-op visit with physician's assistant at 10-14 days following surgery.
 - Wound Check and suture removal.
 - Begin passive pendulum exercises no later than 2 weeks following surgery. No other exercises are to be done until formal physical therapy program begins at 4 weeks post-op.

Phase II: 4 weeks to 3 months

- Formal physical therapy begins at 4 weeks post-op and lasts for 6 weeks
 - Frequency of therapy is twice a week for 6 weeks (from 4-10 weeks).
 - 4-6 weeks: Passive range of motion (ROM) exercises plus active assisted ROM exercises.
 - No external rotation of the shoulder past 20 degrees for 4 weeks post-op
 - No shoulder extension for 4 weeks post-op.
 - 6-8 weeks:
 - Active range of motion exercises
 - 8-10 weeks:
 - Add strengthening exercises.
- Home exercises are to be done for 2 months following supervised therapy program.
- Post-operative visit will occur around 3 months after completion of formal physical program

Phase III: 3- 6 months

- Continue with the home exercise program
- Consider work hardening for demanding return-to-work situations.
 - Usually a QRC is involved in these situations.
- Permanent disability evaluations and restrictions of activities are established at 4 to 6 months post-op.