

**Rehabilitation Program:
Rotator Cuff Repair (Small-Medium Tears)**

Phase I (0-6 weeks)

Goals

- Maintain/ protect integrity of repair
- Gradually increase PROM
- Diminish pain and inflammation
- Prevent muscular inhibition
- Maintain good upright shoulder posture

Precautions

- Maintain arm in sling, remove only for shower or exercise
- No shoulder AROM, lifting greater than 5 lbs, shoulder motion behind back, excessive
- stretching or sudden movements, lifting body weight by hands

Week 1

- Abduction brace or sling
- Home dressing change post-op day 2-3
- Finger wrist and elbow AROM
- First follow-up visit 7-10 days
- Scapula musculature isometrics and cervical ROM

Week 2-6

- Physical therapy modalities
- Sling for four weeks, sleeping with sling for at least four weeks
- Shoulder pendulum and Codman exercises
- Shoulder Flexion: Seated table slides up to 120
- Begin PROM (supine) flexion to 90, ER 30, IR to body/chest
- Progress PROM as tolerated
- Initiate AAROM
- May resume general conditioning (walking, stationary bicycle)

Week 5-6

- Heat before exercise or active warm-up, ice after exercise
- Scapular and glenohumeral joint mobilization as needed to help regain full ROM
 - Dr. Santoro Patients can begin ROM restoration to tolerance
 - Be mindful for capsular tightening
- Start AROM and rotator cuff isometrics

Phase II (6-12 weeks)

Goals

- Allow healing of soft tissue
- Do not overstress healing tissue
- Gradually restore full PROM and AAROM by six weeks
- Decrease pain and inflammation
- Vigilant for adhesive capsulitis

Precautions

- No lifting
- No supporting body weight with hands and arms
- No sudden jerking motions
- No excessive behind the back movements
- Avoid upper extremity bike and ergometer

Weeks 6-8

- Continue PROM, AAROM, and stretching
- Continue periscapular exercises
- Rotator cuff isometrics
- AROM exercises (flexion scapular plane, abduction, IR, ER)
- May start IR and ER strengthening

Weeks 10-12

- Continue ROM as needed
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- Add internal rotation (behind back) stretching
- Dynamic stabilization exercises
- Strengthening program
 - ER and IR with exercise bands
 - ER side lying
 - Lateral Raise
 - Prone rowing
 - Prone horizontal abduction
 - Prone extension
- Initiate light functional activities as tolerated

Phase III (12-16 weeks)

Goals

- Full AROM
- Maintain PROM

- Dynamic shoulder stability
- Gradual restoration of shoulder strength, power, and endurance
- Optimize neuromuscular control
- Gradual return to functional activities

Precautions

- No sudden lifting or pushing
- No overhead lifting

Weeks 12

- Continue all previous exercises
- Progress to fundamental shoulder exercises

Week 16

- Continue ROM and self-capsular stretching
- Advance proprioceptive, neuromuscular activities
- Light sports (golf chipping/putting, tennis ground strokes)
- Begin PREs,
 - Long Arm PNF
 - Open Chain
 - Isotonics & Isokinetics

Phase IV (16 weeks to 9 months)

Goals

- Maintain full non-painful AROM
- Improve muscular strength, power, and endurance
- Gradual return to full functional activities

Week 20

- Initiate interval sport program