

Rehabilitation Guidelines for Small/Medium Rotator Cuff Tears following surgical repair

Phase	Intervention	Goals and Criteria for Progression
Weeks 0-6 weeks Post-Op	<p>Post-Op Day 1: Patients may be immobilized in sling or abduction brace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If sling, use for comfort and when in public • If abduction brace, immobilize for 3-6 weeks per physician recommendation <p>Pendulums Hand squeezes Elbow AROM</p> <p>7-10 days post-op: Pendulums Supine PROM flexion and ER above level of brace Active scapular exercises (“clocks”) Modalities PRN</p>	<p>Protect incision/promote healing</p> <p>Monitor for infection</p> <p>Patient education</p> <p>Control Pain</p> <p>Initiate ROM exercises</p>
Weeks 6-8 Post-Op	<p>Physical Therapy Treatment:</p> <p>Begin AAROM activities in supine, progress to “beach chair” or semi-reclined position</p> <p>Progress to AROM in supine/gravity-minimized positions</p> <p>Submax manual resistance</p> <p>Rhythmic stabilization exercises</p> <p>Table slides Forward Bow Side lying abduction Supine punches Scapular strengthening with arms below shoulder height</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prone Row • Prone Extension • ER/IR • Standing Tubing Row 	<p>Improve ROM</p> <p>Improve neuromuscular control and strength</p> <p>Be able to elevate to 90° elevation in scapular plane without humeral head elevation</p>

	<p>Closed chain stabilization exercises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin in quadruped <p>Elbow/wrist/hand strengthening</p> <p>Modalities PRN. Consider NMES to posterior cuff</p>	
Weeks 8-12 Post-Op	<p>Continue to progress all exercises from previous phases</p> <p>Closed chain stabilization exercises at 90° elevation</p> <p>Continue rhythmic stabilization drills with more advanced activities including labile surfaces</p>	<p>Achieve full AROM in the scapular plane</p> <p>Improve endurance</p> <p>Begin progressing PROM about week 12</p> <p>Optimize neuromuscular control No humeral head elevation with flexion</p>
Weeks 12 - 6 Months	<p>Progress exercises from previous phases</p> <p>When appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push ups/DB bench pressing • Shoulder Press • UE Plyometric activities <p>Bilateral shoulder flexion on the wall</p> <p>Wall Angels</p>	<p>Achieve full AROM in all planes</p> <p>Strength testing strong and painless, should not be able to “break” patient during test</p> <p>HHD testing when appropriate</p> <p>Return to work/sport or desired activities</p> <p>Interval Sport Programs once strength and ROM goals achieved</p> <p>Emphasize prevention and long-term HEP</p>