

Rotator Cuff Repair Protocol

Post-op visits:

- 2w, 6w, 12w, 6m

Xrays:

- None needed unless injury has occurred

Physical therapy:

- Therapy prescription will be provided at your 2-week appointment (may start earlier if patient requested).

Home exercise program (HEP):

- These are a guide for you and the physical therapist; physical therapist may add on exercises as necessary for rehabilitation

Restrictions:

- Sling:
 - Full-time 2 weeks and then 4 more weeks only when sleeping or in public
- Motion restrictions:
 - Do not push yourself out of a chair or bed with your operative arm until 12 weeks after surgery
- Strengthening and weightlifting:
 - **No strengthening operative arm until 12 weeks after surgery**
 - Weightlifting restrictions: avoid bench press, Olympic lifts, and overhead press until 6 months post-op

Weeks 0-2: Acute Recovery After Surgery

Sling	• Sling at all times except during hygiene and home exercises
Weight Restrictions	• < 1 lb (phone, toothbrush, etc) • No strengthening
Range of Motion	• No shoulder motion except as needed during exercises
Exercises	• Phase I Home Exercise Program
Misc	• Do not submerge incision for 4 weeks after surgery • Ice 3-4x/day with ice packs on towel over shoulder or ice machine

Weeks 2-6: Passive and Active-Assist Motion with limits

Sling	• Sling while sleeping or out in public spaces
Weight Restrictions	• < 1 lb (phone, toothbrush, etc) ◦ May begin using arm for daily activities in front of body (i.e. computer/desk work) • No strengthening
Range of Motion	• Start passive and active-assist range of motion ◦ Flexion: < 120 deg (hand to about head height) ◦ Abduction (away from body): none ◦ External rotation: < 30 degrees ◦ Internal rotation: to stomach – only in front of body (not behind back) ◦ <i>Helpful guide: pretend your arm is against a wall – do not do any motion away from your body that would go into the wall (abduction or external rotation)</i>
Exercises	• Phase II Home Exercise Program – Rotator cuff repair

Misc	- Do not submerge incision for 4 weeks after surgery - Ice 3-4x/day with ice packs on towel over shoulder or ice machine
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Weeks 6-12: Advance motion and start active motion

Sling	Out of sling completely
Weight Restrictions	< 1 lb (phone, toothbrush, etc) No strengthening or isometric exercises
Range of Motion	- Start active motion - Flexion, adducted-external rotation, abduction: full without limits - Internal rotation: in front of body - May start gentle abducted IR exercises (sleeper stretches) but continue to avoid behind the back IR
Exercises	Phase III Home Exercise Program – Rotator Cuff Repair
Misc	- Heat before exercises - Ice after exercises

Months 3 – 4.5: Regain full motion and start light strengthening

Sling	None
Weight Restrictions	2-3 pounds - May start theraband exercises < 2-3 lb bands
Range of Motion	- Continue regaining motion - Start internal rotation stretches - Ok to progress IR behind back - IR with towel stretches - Sleeper stretches - More aggressive external rotation and flexion stretches if stiff
Exercises	Phase IV Home Exercise Program – Rotator Cuff Repair
Misc	- Heat before exercises - Ice after exercises

Months 4.5 – 6: Progress Strengthening

Sling	None
Weight Restrictions	5-6 pounds - Progress theraband exercises to 5-6 lb bands
Range of Motion	Full motion should be achieved
Exercises	Phase IV Home Exercise Program – Rotator Cuff Repair
Misc	- Heat before exercises - Ice after exercises

Months 6+: Return to full activity

- Weight restriction: none
- Continue Rotator Cuff Repair Phase IV as needed and return to normal activity, sports, weightlifting, etc.