



# ROTATOR CUFF REPAIR REHABILITATION GUIDELINES

Dr. Ed Tingstad

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## PHASE 1: Immediate Post-Op (Surgery – 4/6 weeks)

<b>Goals</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Control swelling and ice, compression, and elevation and pain control	
<b>Restrictions</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> NO active ROM exercises <input type="checkbox"/> Active ROM exercises initiation based on the size of the tear <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Small Tears (0-1 cm)</u> – no active ROM before 4 weeks</li> <li>○ <u>Medium Tears (1-3 cm)</u> – no active ROM before 6 weeks</li> <li>○ <u>Large Tears (3-5 cm)</u> – no active ROM before 6 weeks</li> <li>○ <u>Massive Tears (&gt;5 cm)</u> – no active ROM before 8 weeks</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> NO strengthening or resisted motions of the shoulder until 8-12 weeks	
<b>Immobilization</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Type of immobilization depends on amount of abduction required to repair rotator cuff tendons with little or no tension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Small &amp; Medium Tears</u> – 1-2 weeks</li> <li>○ <u>Large Tears (3-5 cm) &amp; Massive Tears (&gt;5 cm)</u> – 6-8 weeks</li> </ul>	
<b>Pain Control</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Patients treated with arthroscopic rotator cuff repair experience less postoperative pain than those with mini-open or open repairs <input type="checkbox"/> Narcotics for 7-10 days following surgery <input type="checkbox"/> NSAIDS for patients with persistent discomfort – limit in large/massive first 4 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> Therapeutic modalities	
<b>Exercises</b>	ROM	<input type="checkbox"/> Passive ONLY <input type="checkbox"/> 100 degrees of forward elevation <input type="checkbox"/> 20 degrees of external rotation <input type="checkbox"/> 70 degrees of abduction <input type="checkbox"/> Scapular protraction/retraction <input type="checkbox"/> Elbow ROM with supination and pronation prn <input type="checkbox"/> Emphasize supine stretching
	MUSCLE ACTIVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> Grip strength only
<b>Progression Criteria</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> At least 6 weeks since surgery <input type="checkbox"/> Painless passive ROM: 140 forward elevation, 40 external rotation, 60-80 abduction	



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## PHASE 2: Weeks 6 – 12

<b>Goals</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 160 degrees forward elevation <input type="checkbox"/> 60 degrees external rotation <input type="checkbox"/> 90 degrees abduction	
<b>Restrictions</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> NO strengthening or resisted motions of the shoulder until 12 weeks after surgery <input type="checkbox"/> No AROM for patients with massive tears first 8 weeks	
<b>Immobilization</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Discontinuation of sling or abduction orthosis, use for comfort only	
<b>Pain Control</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> NSAIDs for patients with persistent discomfort following surgery <input type="checkbox"/> Therapeutic modalities	
<b>Exercises</b>	ROM	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue with passive ROM exercises to achieve above goals <input type="checkbox"/> Begin active assisted TOM exercises <input type="checkbox"/> Progress to active ROM exercises as tolerated after full motion achieved with active assisted exercises <input type="checkbox"/> Light passive stretching at end ROMs
	MUSCLE ACTIVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> Begin rotator cuff and scapular stabilizer strengthening for <u>small tears</u> with excellent healing potential <input type="checkbox"/> Continue with grip strengthening
<b>Progression Criteria</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Painless active ROM <input type="checkbox"/> No shoulder pain or tenderness and satisfactory clinical examination	

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## PHASE 3: Months 4 – 6

<p><b>Goals</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Improve shoulder strength, power, and endurance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Improve neuromuscular control and shoulder proprioception</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for gradual return to functional activities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Establish a home exercise maintenance program that is performed at least three times weekly</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Exercises</b></p>	<p>ROM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Achieve motion equal to contralateral side</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Passive capsular stretching and end ROMs, especially cross-body, adduction and internal rotation to stretch the posterior capsule</li> </ul>
	<p>STRENGTHENING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rotator cuff strengthening, begin with closed chain isometrics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Internal rotation, external rotation, abduction, forward elevation, extension</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Progress to open chain strengthening with TheraBand's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Exercises performed with the elbow flexed to 90, starting position is with the shoulder in the neutral position, exercises are performed through an arc of 45 degrees in each of the five planes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Progression to the next band occurs usually in 2–3-week intervals</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Progress to light isotonic dumbbell exercises</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Strengthening of the deltoid – especially anterior deltoid</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Strengthening of scapular stabilizers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Scapular retraction, protraction, depression, shoulder shrugs</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Progressive systematic interval program for returning to sports</li> </ul>
<p><b>Maximal Improvement and Warning Signs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <u>Small Tears</u> – 4-6 months</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <u>Medium Tears</u> – 6-8 months</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <u>Large and Massive Tears</u> – 8-12 months</li> </ul> <p>*Patients will continue to show improvement in strength and function for at least 12 months</p> <p>Warning Signs: loss of motion, lack of strength progression, continued night pain</p>	