

Complex Rotator Cuff Repair Rehabilitation Protocol +/- Biceps Tenodesis

Phase	Goals	Precautions / Restrictions	Treatment
Weeks 0 – 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect surgical site + repair with full time use of shoulder immobilizer x 6 weeks Decrease pain + inflammation with P.R.I.C.E principles Minimize muscle atrophy <u>No shoulder range of motion</u> <u>If Biceps Tenodesis – No Biceps Strengthening x 8 Weeks</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear immobilizer with pillow except for hygiene and exercise performance <u>NO SHOULDER RANGE OF MOTION</u> No cross-body adduction, extension, or ROM behind the back No excessive arm motions No lifting of any object on the operative / involved side No lifting > 5 lbs. or pushing / pulling > 20 lbs. on uninvolved side 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>No passive or active shoulder range of motion</u> Elbow / Wrist / Hand – Active Assisted ROM to Active ROM with the arm in plane of body Postural education and Cervical ROM Submaximal scapular retraction exercises with the shoulder immobilizer on Ice / Cryotherapy – 5 - 7 x day, 40 min each session Ultrasound / Electrical stimulation if available Initial visit – FOTO PRO, QuickDASH Week 3 – Core activation + cardiovascular exercise (bike) with the immobilizer on and no handlebars
Weeks 6 – 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain integrity of repair Initiate Passive ROM and slowly advance to AA ROM and Active ROM Functional AROM of shoulder by week 16 Functional scapular mechanics by week 16 Initiate muscle activation Improve motor control Improve total arm strength 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wean out of the shoulder immobilizer as tolerated Perform gentle pain free stretching but do not force motion No weight bearing through the involved shoulder <u>If Biceps Tenodesis – May initiate Biceps Loading @ week 9 (Light resistance with 1 – 2 lb. curls → 1 lb. progression every 2 weeks)</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Week 6 – Supine PROM in all planes of motion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FOTO, QuickDASH Progress Scapular mobility and retraction exercises Week 8 – AAROM initiated once PROM achieved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core / LE training with No stress to repair Single plane / multi joint exercises Balance / proprioception Week 10 – Initiate Shoulder isometrics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AROM initiated once AAROM achieved Week 12 – Initiate Rhythmic stabilization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexion at 100°, IR / ER at 45° in scapular plane Continue with stationary bike up to 30 minutes
Weeks 16 – 24 (Months 4 – 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain integrity of repair Initiate Rotator Cuff Strengthening Exercises Progress scapular stabilizer strengthening Full Active ROM compared bilaterally w/o compensation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue gentle stretching PRN Avoid RTC pain with strengthening No weight bearing through shoulder After full AA + AROM is obtained → Can strengthen with a 10 lb. limit → Once painless at 10 lbs. → Progress to 20 lbs. → As tolerated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Week 16 – Continue Active Range of Motion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FOTO, QuickDASH Advancement to isotonic exercise per tolerance in all planes, including multiplane exercises as long as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isometrics are progressing No compensations during exercise performance
Weeks 24 + (Months 6+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate return to sport progression Initiate plyometric exercise progression Initiate higher level impact activity and sport specific movements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on form and control during exercise performance Strengthening to focus on reps of 8 – 10 and not 1 rep max efforts Use of appropriate work rest intervals between sets Assess tolerance to activity during, after and at 24 hours after activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low level sport specific activity, progressing to higher demand activity Continue with Anaerobic + Aerobic interval training Continue with core stability per tolerance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple planes Stability in all 3 planes of motion Plyometric activities progressing from simple to complex, less load to more load Week 24 – QuickDASH, FOTO, HHD / Isokinetics 1 year follow-up – HHD Testing

This protocol is not meant to be prescriptive but a recommendation to guide the rehabilitation process.

Each patient's progress may vary based on specifics of their injury and procedure.

