



Massive Rotator Cuff Tears

Post-Operative Rehabilitation Protocol

0-6weeks

- Shoulder abduction sling x 8 weeks, taken off only for exercises or hygiene
- Active ROM Elbow, Wrist and Hand
- True Passive (ONLY) ROM Shoulder. **NO ACTIVE MOTION.**
- Pendulums
- Supine Elevation in Scapular plane = 140 degrees
- External Rotation to tolerance with arm at side. (Emphasize ER, minimum goal 40°)
- Scapular Stabilization exercises (side lying)
- Deltoid isometrics in neutral (submaximal) as ROM improves
- No Pulley/Canes until 6 weeks (these are active motions)

6-12 weeks

- Discontinue sling use at 8 weeks
- Begin AAROM and advance to Active as tolerated
- Elevation in scapular plane and external rotation
- Light stretching at end ranges
- Cuff Isometrics with the arm at the side
- Upper Body Ergometry

3-12 months

- Advance to full ROM as tolerated with passive stretching at end ranges
- Advance strengthening as tolerated: isometrics, bands and light weights (1-5lbs); 8-12 reps/2-3 sets per rotator cuff, deltoid, and scapular stabilizers
- Only do strengthening 3x/week to avoid rotator cuff tendonitis
- Begin eccentrically resisted motions, plyometrics (ex. Weighted ball toss), proprioception (es. body blade)
- Begin sports related rehab at 4 ½ months, including advanced conditioning
- Return to throwing at 6 months
- Throw from pitcher's mound at 9 months
- Collision sports at 9 months
- MMI is usually at 12 months post-op

Shoulder
Abduction Sling

Sling on at all
times x 8
weeks, taken
off only for
exercises and
hygiene

ROM Restrictions

PROM only beginning
week 1. No AROM until
6 weeks.



Exercise	Week													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	16	20	24
Initial Exercises:														
Active ROM: Elbow, Wrist, & Hand														
Pendulums														
Supine Elevation in Scapular Plane (140°)														
Scapular Stabilization														
Deltoid Isometric in Neutral														
Passive ROM														
Pulley/Cane Exercises														
Sling Discontinuation														
Advanced Exercises:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	16	20	24
Begin Active ROM (No IR until 8 weeks)														
Cuff Isometrics														
Light Stretching at End Ranges														
Upper Body Ergometer														
Eccentrically Resisted Motions/Plyometrics														
Sports Related Rehab														
Cardiovascular Exercises:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	16	20	24
Bike														
Elliptical Trainer														
Rowing														
Stair stepper														
Agility Exercises:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	16	20	24
Running Progression														
Functional Sports Test														
High Level Activities:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	16	20	24
Golf Progression														
Return to Throwing														
Return to Throwing from the Pitcher's Mound at 9 months														
Return to Full/Collision Sport at 9 months post-op														

Adapted from post-operative protocol created by Howard Head Physical Therapy, Jill Monson, PT, OCS and Jon Schoenecker, PT, OCS, CSCS