

Guide to Rotator Cuff Repair Rehabilitation

Welcome to our Rotator Cuff Repair Rehabilitation video series. The goal of these videos is to help maximize your recovery following rotator cuff surgery. *These videos should not be used as a substitute for regular physical therapy visits and guidance from your physician.*

Please remember the following as you use these videos:

- Only progress from one phase to the next based on recommendation from your physician. Most therapy regimens, particularly after surgery, are based on a healing timeline. Progressing too quickly, even though it may feel okay at first, may put you at risk for injury.
- Regular physical therapy visits are valuable for giving you feedback on your progress and helping to ensure you are doing exercises properly.
- Equipment needed may include a stick or cane, pulley, resistance bands and light dumbbells.
- Icing is very important after each therapy session – place an ice pack or cooling pad on the affected area for 10 minutes to help limit any irritation from exercise.
- If the affected joint is stiff, try using moist heat for 10 minutes prior to exercise to help loosen things up.
- If you have any questions or concerns regarding your condition while using this video, contact your physician.

Best of luck in your recovery.

PHASE I - Protection / Passive Motion

GOALS: Allow healing of the tendon and minimize shoulder stiffness

KEY POINTS:

- Engage in no active motion of the shoulder (ex: lifting arm away from side on its own)
- Engage in no motion behind the back for 8 weeks following surgery
- Wear sling at all times (including sleep) except for dressing, showering and when conducting exercises
- Remove sling completely only at the direction of your physician

PHASE 1 EXERCISES:

1. PENDULUMS
2. STICK EXTERNAL ROTATION
3. ACTIVE MOTION ELBOW, WRIST, AND HAND
4. GRIP STRENGTHENING
5. TABLE TOP WARM-UP
6. SHRUGS

7. FORWARD ROLLS
8. BACKWARD ROLLS

See Phase 1 video at <http://www.matthewboesmd.com/rotator-cuff-repair-rehabilitation/> to view the exercises.

PHASE 2 – Active Motion and Gentle Stretching

GOAL: Regain full motion of the shoulder in all directions

KEY POINTS:

- Engage in no motion behind the back for 8 weeks following surgery
- Normal shoulder motion is okay – no hiking the shoulders up to the neck
- For exercises, start with table slides, progress to pulleys or stick exercises, and finally engage in active motion (moving the arm on its own)
- Work to regain full motion by the end of Phase 2; engage in STRETCHING exercises at 10 weeks following surgery if you feel deficient
 - Stretching exercises should be conducted 3-4 times per day
- Isometrics are okay to start at 10 weeks following surgery

PHASE 2 EXERCISES:

1. TABLE SLIDES – ELEVATION
2. TABLE SLIDES – ABDUCTION
3. PULLEYS – FORWARD ELEVATION
4. PULLEYS – ABDUCTION
5. UPRIGHT STICK ELEVATION
6. UPRIGHT STICK ABDUCTION
7. UPRIGHT STICK EXTERNAL ROTATION @ 0 DEG
8. UPRIGHT STICK INTERNAL ROTATION BEHIND BACK
9. NO MONEYS
10. TABLE TOP PROTRACTION
11. TABLE TOP RETRACTION
12. WALL PROTRACTION & RETRACTION
13. WALL THUMB TACK EXERCISE - UPWARD & DOWNWARD ROTATION

NOTE: At 10 weeks following surgery, if motion is deficient and shoulder is stiff, start the following stretching exercises. However, these are not to be done before 10 weeks post-op.

14. STRETCHING – EXTERNAL ROTATION @ WAIST LEVEL
15. STRETCHING – EXTERNAL ROTATION @ SHOULDER LEVEL
16. STRETCHING – EXTERNAL ROTATION ABOVE SHOULDER LEVEL
17. STRETCHING – INTERNAL ROTATION WITH STICK
18. STRETCHING – INTERNAL ROTATION WITH TOWEL

NOTE: At 10 weeks following surgery, if motion is good and the shoulder is comfortable, start the following light strengthening exercises. However, these are not to be done before 10 weeks post-op.

19. ISOMETRIC – FORWARD ELEVATION
20. ISOMETRIC – ABDUCTION
21. ISOMETRIC – EXTERNAL ROTATION

See Phase 2 video at <http://www.matthewboesmd.com/rotator-cuff-repair-rehabilitation/> to view the exercises.

PHASE 3 – Early Strengthening

GOAL: Start light reconditioning exercises for the rotator cuff muscles

KEY POINTS:

- Conduct STRETCHING exercises [1-5 below] to improve motion or how much you can move your arm
 - Do these exercises 2-3 times daily until full motion is achieved
 - Start aggressive stretching at this point if motion not normal
 - Do warm up stretching prior to each strengthening session
- Conduct STRENGTHENING exercises [6-13 below] to improve muscle function and endurance
 - Do every other or every third day to prevent irritation
 - These are high repetition and low resistance exercises
 - Start with one set of 12-15 reps; as strength improves go to two sets per session
- Exercise bands (ex. Therabands) are used during this phase for light resistance (1-5lbs). Bands are color-coded. Start with the lightest resistance and progress to the next level over 1-2 weeks
- No strengthening above shoulder level or with arm behind back

PHASE 3 EXERCISES:

1. WARM UP STRETCH – WALL SLIDES
2. WARM UP STRETCH – EXTERNAL ROTATION AT WAIST
3. WARM UP STRETCH – EXTERNAL ROTATION ABOVE SHOULDER
4. WARM UP STRETCH – CROSS BODY
5. WARM UP STRETCH – BEHIND BACK WITH STICK
6. BAND – ELEVATION AND ABDUCTION
7. BAND – EXTERNAL ROTATION
8. BAND – INTERNAL ROTATION
9. BAND – UPRIGHT HORIZONTAL ROW
10. STANDING ELEVATION
11. SUPINE PROTRACTION
12. RETRACTION & DEPRESSION @ SHOULDER LEVEL
13. RETRACTION & DEPRESSION @ WAIST LEVEL

See Phase 3 video at <http://www.matthewboesmd.com/rotator-cuff-repair-rehabilitation/> to view the exercises.

PHASE 4 – Advanced Strengthening

GOAL: Regain normal strength and pain-free function of the shoulder

KEY POINTS:

- Continue warm-up stretch if motion is not full
- Progress to light dumbbells (2-5lbs) as strength improves; some exercises are easier to do with Therabands; it is okay to continue with bands if they are more comfortable than dumbbells
- Strengthening should continue 3 times per week for up to 12 months to maximize positive outcomes
- Conduct prone scapular muscle exercises [15-18 below] with no weight at first; however, as strength improves add light weight (if comfortable)

PHASE 4 EXERCISES:

1. WARM UP STRETCH – WALL SLIDES
2. WARM UP STRETCH – EXTERNAL ROTATION
3. WARM UP STRETCH – CROSS BODY
4. WARM UP STRETCH – BEHIND BACK
5. DUMBBELL – ELEVATION AND ABDUCTION
6. DUMBBELL – EXTERNAL ROTATION
7. DUMBBELL – INTERNAL ROTATION
8. DUMBBELL – BENT ROW
9. DUMBBELL – POSTERIOR RAISE
10. BAND – DIAGONALS
11. DUMBBELL DIAGONALS
12. BAND – PUNCHES
13. BAND – EXTERNAL ROTATION @ 90 DEGREES
14. BAND – INTERNAL ROTATION @ 90 DEGREES
15. PRONE ABDUCTION @ 90 DEGREES
16. PRONE ABDUCTION @ 110 DEGREES
17. PRONE ABDUCTION @ 90 DEGREES WITH ROTATION
18. PRONE EXTENSION

See Phase 4 video at <http://www.matthewboesmd.com/rotator-cuff-repair-rehabilitation/> to view the exercises.

For more information, visit www.MatthewBoesMD.com