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**ARTHROSCOPIC SHOULDER SURGERY  
REHABILITATION PROTOCOL**  
*DECOMPRESSION, AC JOINT RESECTION*

**GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- The local anesthetic (similar to novacaine) in your shoulder will last 6-12 hours
  - Start taking the pain medication as soon as you start feeling pain
- Use cryotherapy continuously for the first 72 hours, then as-needed thereafter
  - Ensure that the cryotherapy cuff never contacts the skin directly
  - Apply to the shoulder after performing rehab exercises for the first 12 weeks
- Remove the bandage 72 hours after surgery, but leave the white steritrips on the skin
  - Apply fresh gauze pad or bandaid to any incision that is moist or weeping
- You may shower after dressing removal as long as the incisions/steritrips are dry
  - All incisions must be completely dry for 24 hours before getting wet in shower
  - Do NOT submerge the shoulder underwater for the first 6 weeks
- The sling is for comfort and to protect the shoulder from sudden movements
  - Wear the sling for the first 2 weeks, removing it for exercises and showers
  - Wear the sling when out of the house for the first 3 weeks
- Schedule a follow-up appointment for one weeks after surgery 410-448-6400

**PHASE I**

Begins immediately post-op through the first postoperative visit (2 weeks)

**Goals:**

- Protect the shoulder and minimize inflammation
- Ensure wound healing
- Initiate early range of motion
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**Sling:**

- Wear the sling full-time for the first week, removing for shower and exercises
- Discontinue the sling at night as comfortable after the first week
- Discontinue the sling at home after the second week postoperative visit
- May type or write in the sling. No lifting/carrying anything heavier than a pen/pencil

**Therapeutic Exercises (remove sling to perform 3 times per day):**

- *External rotation stretching.* Use the uninvolved arm to passively rotate the hand/arm on the surgical side to the outside (away from the belly).
- *Supine active-assisted forward elevation stretching.* Using the other, non-operated arm for assistance, stretch the operated arm overhead.

**PHASE II**

Begins 2 weeks postoperatively and extends to 4 weeks postoperatively

**Goals:**

- Protect the shoulder
- Regain range of motion
- Minimize atrophy

**Sling:**

- Wear the sling outside of the home for the first 3 weeks
- Discontinue the sling entirely after 3 weeks as tolerated
- No lifting/carrying anything heavier than a cup of coffee

**Therapeutic Exercises (3 times per day):**

- All exercises from Phase I
- *Behind-the-back internal rotation stretching*
- *Shoulder shrug*
- *Scapular retractions*
- *Wall-climb and/or pulley assisted elevation in scapular plane*
- *Supported active shoulder rotation*
- Isometrics in all planes as tolerated

**PHASE III**

Begins 4 weeks postoperatively and extends to 6 weeks postoperatively

**Criteria for advancement to Phase III:**

- Painless range of motion

**Goals:**

- Maximize range of motion
- Improve functional strength while minimizing inflammation

**Therapeutic Exercises (perform strengthening exercises every other day):**

- All exercises from Phase II daily
- *External rotation stretching in abduction/elevation*
- *Cross-body stretching*
- *Theraband internal and external rotation in shoulder adduction (arm at the side)*
- Active prone elevations (forward, scapular-plane, lateral/abduction, extension)

**PHASE IV**

Beyond 6 weeks postoperatively

**Criteria for advancement to Phase IV:**

- Full, painless range of motion

- No difficulty with theraband strengthening

**Goals:**

- Maximize functional strength

**Therapeutic Exercises (perform every other day):**

- All exercises from Phase III
- Progressive Theraband in all planes as tolerated
- Progressive weight training as tolerated

**RETURN TO SPORT**

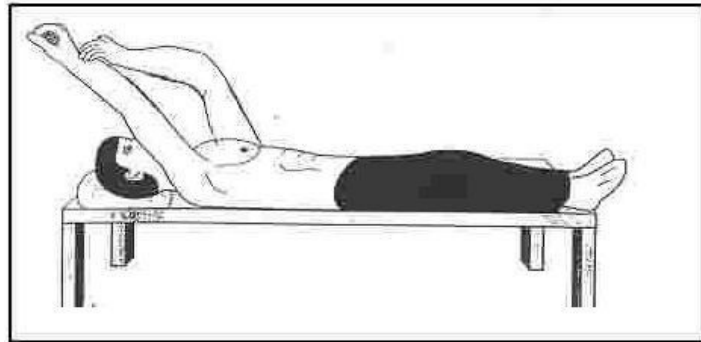
Requires clearance from physician

Sport training/practice once shoulder at 90% of uninjured side (minimum 6 weeks)

- Start with 'walk-through' at < 1% of maximum effort
- Increase 10% effort each session as tolerated

Goal of return to full participation in contact sports at 3 months

**Exercise Diagrams (Phase I)**

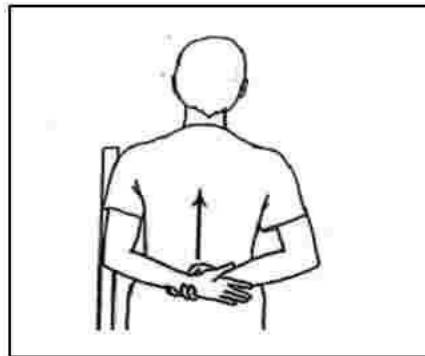


*Supine active-assisted forward elevation stretching*

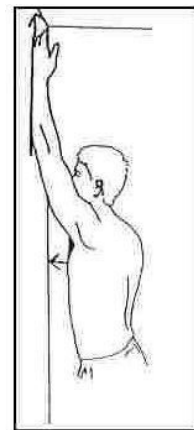
**Exercise Diagrams (Phase 2)**



*Supine external rotation Stretching*



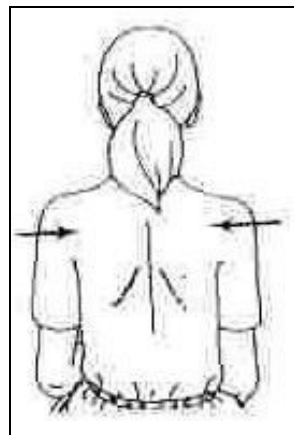
*Behind-the-back stretching*



*Wall climb*



*Shoulder Shrugs*

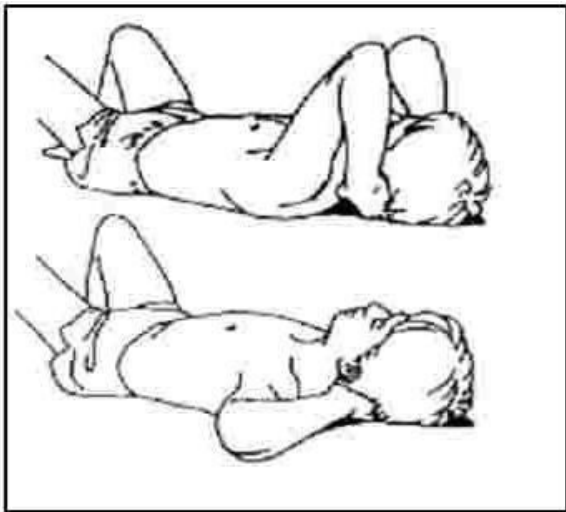


*Scapular retractions*



*Supported active shoulder rotation*

**Selected Exercise Diagrams (Phase 3)**



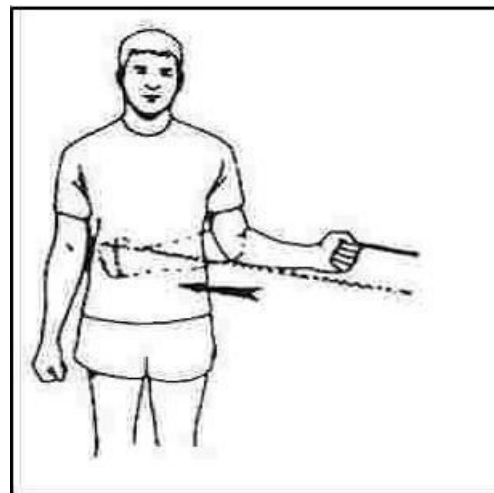
*External rotation stretching in abduction/elevation*



*Cross-body stretching*



*Theraband external rotation*



*Theraband internal rotation*