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LARGE ROTATOR CUFF REPAIR REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

Phase	Restrictions	Therapeutic Exercises
Phase I: Weeks 0-4 Goals: Reduce swelling and edema, minimize pain, retard muscle atrophy, protect the surgical repair, and avoid shoulder stiffness	-Sling at all times except for hygiene and physical therapy x4 weeks -No elevation of the arm above 90 degrees x4 weeks -No lifting greater than 3lbs with the surgical limb x6 weeks -May shower post-op day 2 with bulky dressing off -No strengthening Criteria for progression: -Tolerates PROM -At least 4 weeks s/p	-Passive range of motion 0-60 degrees flexion and abduction, and external rotation to neutral x4 weeks -When supine: place a towel roll or pillow under the elbow to remain in a neutral position -No support of body weight through surgical extremity x6 weeks -Full elbow ROM without resistance, arm at the side -Modalities PRN -Pain control and edema control -Periscapular strengthening -Neck stretches and neck ROM -Soft tissue mobilization -Ball squeezes -Pendulums -Scapular isometrics -Cryotherapy -Joint mobilizations Grade I and II, and oscillations for pain relief
Phase II: Weeks 5-6 Goals: Progress range of motion, minimize pain, retard muscle atrophy, protect the repair, and begin neuromuscular control	-Sling at all times except for hygiene and physical therapy x6 weeks -Continue phase I exercises -No lifting greater than 3lbs with the surgical limb x6 weeks Criteria for progression: -Tolerated PROM, AAROM, isometrics -Passive forward flexion to 120 degrees -At least 6 weeks s/p	-Passive range of motion 0-120 degrees flexion and abduction, and external rotation to 30 degrees -Correct postural dysfunctions -Be careful not to overstress healing tissues -Pain control and inflammation control -Initiate supine AAROM -Posture exercises -Core strengthening -May begin sub-max isometrics after 4 weeks: shoulder flexion, abduction, extension, and external rotation -Prone row to neutral -Cardio: walking and stationary bike (no treadmill, elliptical, stairmaster, or road bike)

Phase III: Weeks 7-9 Goals: Full range of motion, minimal pain, improve neuromuscular control, improve mechanics	-Discontinue Sling -Continue phase I and II exercises -No strengthening -No lifting greater than 5lbs with the surgical limb Criteria for progression: -Tolerates AROM -Active flexion to 120 degrees with good mechanics -At least 8 weeks s/p	-Progress to full passive, active, and active assisted range of motion -Focus on neuromuscular control and good mechanics -Scapular stabilization and strengthening exercises -Controlled progression of AROM activities -Initiate scaption, AROM for shoulder -Cardio: walking and stationary bike (no treadmill, elliptical, stairmaster, or road bike)
Phase IV: Weeks 10-12 Goals: Full range of motion, no pain, good mechanics, begin strengthening	-Continue phase II and III exercises -Progress multi-planar movements -No heavy strengthening Criteria for progression: -Able to perform all functional activities without limitations or pain -Able to actively flex the shoulder to 140 degrees in a standing position with good mechanics	-Initiate light strengthening exercises -Progress non-painful AROM -Advanced shoulder motions and neuromuscular control -PNF patterns with light resistance -Good scapulothoracic awareness -Closed chain exercises: ball on the wall exercises -Progress External Rotation ROM in varying angles of abduction -Progress prone exercises to include strengthening -Core strengthening progression
Phase V: Week 12 and onward Goals: Full range of motion, increase strengthening, great mechanics, sports specific functional activity progression	-Sport or work specific training -Return to recreational activities -Normalize strength and endurance Criteria for progression: -May return to sports after clearance from therapist and surgeon -Full return to activity typically at 5 months s/p Criteria for discharge: -<10% strength deficit -Limb similarly index of 90% or greater -45/50 on biomechanical functional tests (if performed) -NO pain or complains of instability	-Continue to work on shoulder motion in varying speeds and angles without compensation -Progress rotator cuff strengthening in different angles and velocities -Progress weight strengthening with high reps and low weight to low reps and higher weight -Throwing progression or overhead program if indicated