

Physiotherapy Protocol:

Rotator Cuff Repair + Subacromial Decompression

Patient to remain in sling for 6 weeks

Remove sling for washing only. Lean forward with the arm hanging down to get into the armpit for washing.

Weeks 0-3:

- Elbow ROM, wrist ROM

Weeks 3-6:

- Elbow ROM, wrist ROM, grip strengthening and scapular setting exercises
- True PROM only - the rotator cuff tendon needs to heal back into the bone
- ROM goals: 110° FE, 0° ER at side; ABD max 60-80° without rotation
- No resisted motion of shoulder until 12 weeks post-op
- Minimise canes/pulleys until 6 weeks post-op, because these are active-assisted exercises
- Heat before Physio, ice after Physio

Weeks 6-12:

- Begin AAROM as tolerated
- Goals: re-establish full range of movement with 160 FE, 30 ER increasing as tolerated
- Light passive stretching at end ranges
- At 8 weeks, can begin isometric strengthening to unaffected muscle groups

Months 3-12:

- Advance to full AROM as tolerated with passive stretching at end ranges
- Advance strengthening as tolerated: isometrics → bands → light weights (0.5-2 kgs); 8-12 reps/2-3 sets per rotator cuff, deltoid, and scapular stabilisers
- Be careful not to overdue strengthening to avoid rotator cuff tendonitis (3x/week)
- Begin eccentrically resisted movement and exercises as able