

Dr. Preston Wolin

Rotator Cuff Repair Type III Protocol

Large to Massive Tears: > 4 cm
Supraspinatus and/or Infraspinatus

Please call 773.248.4150 with any questions, or if patient is not progressing

- Phase I: Immediate Post-Surgical Phase (Day 1-10)
 - Goals
 - Maintain integrity of the repair
 - Gradually increase passive range of motion
 - Diminish pain and inflammation
 - Prevent muscular inhibition
 - Day 1-6
 - Sling or slight abduction brace **physician decision**
 - Pendulum exercises 4-8x daily (flexion, circles)
 - AAROM exercise (L-Bar)
 - ER/IR in scapular plane
 - PROM
 - Flexion to tolerance
 - ER/IR in scapular plane (gentle ROM)
 - Elbow/hand gripping & ROM exercises
 - Submaximal gentle isometrics
 - Flexion
 - Abduction
 - External rotation
 - Internal rotation
 - Elbow flexors
 - Cryotherapy for pain and inflammation
 - Ice 15-20 minutes every hour
 - Sleeping

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- Sleep in sling or brace
- Day 7-10
 - Continue use of brace or sling
 - Continue pendulum exercises
 - Progress passive ROM to tolerance
 - Flexion to at least 90 degrees
 - ER in scapular plane to 35 degrees
 - IR in scapular plane to 35 degrees
 - Continue elbow/hand ROM & gripping exercises
 - Continue submaximal isometrics
 - Flexion with bent elbow
 - Extension with bent elbow
 - Abduction with bent elbow
 - ER/IR with arm in scapular plane
 - Elbow flexion
 - Continue use of ice for pain control
 - Use ice at least 6-7 times daily
 - Sleeping
 - Continue sleeping in brace until physician instructs
- Precautions
 - Maintain arm in brace, remove only for exercise
 - No lifting of objects
 - No excessive shoulder extension
 - No excessive or aggressive stretching or sudden movements
 - No supporting of body weight by hands
 - Keep incision clean & dry
- Phase II: Protection Phase (Day 11 – Week 6)
 - Goals

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- Allow healing of soft tissue
- Do not overstress healing tissue
- Gradually restore full passive ROM by week 6
- Re-establish dynamic shoulder stability
- Decrease pain & inflammation
- Day 11 – 14
 - Continue use of brace
 - PROM to tolerance
 - Full flexion
 - ER at 90 degrees abduction to at least 45 degrees (working to 90 degrees)
 - IR at 90 degrees abduction to 30 degrees max (by 6 weeks)
 - Dynamic stabilization drills
 - Rhythmic stabilization drills
 - ER/IR in scapular plane
 - Flexion/extension at 100 degrees flexion
 - Continue all isometric contractions
 - Continue use of cryotherapy as needed
 - Continue all precautions
- Week 3 - 4
 - Initiate AAROM flexion in supine (therapist supports arm during motion)
 - AAROM to tolerance
 - ER/IR in scapular plane
 - ER/IR at 90 degrees abduction (IR only to 30 deg max)
 - Continue all exercises listed above
 - Progress PROM to full ROM ~week 6, except for IR
 - Initiate prone rowing to neutral arm position
 - Initiate isotonic elbow flexion
 - Continue use of ice as needed
 - May use heat prior to ROM exercises

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- May use pool for light ROM exercises
- Continue use of brace during sleeping until end of week 4-6 (or per MD instruction)
- Discontinue use of brace at end of week 4-6 (per MD instruction)
- Week 5 – 6
 - Full PROM at 6 weeks
 - full flexion
 - ER @ 90 degrees ABD to 90 degrees
 - IR @90 degrees ABD to 30 degrees
 - May use heat prior to exercises
 - Continue AAROM and stretching exercises
 - Initiate AROM Exercises (6 weeks)
 - Shoulder flexion scapular plane
 - Shoulder abduction
- Precautions
 - No lifting
 - No excessive behind the back movements
 - No supporting of body weight by hands or arms
 - No sudden jerking motions
- Phase III: Intermediate Phase (Week 7-14)
 - Goals
 - Full AROM (Week 10-12)
 - Maintain full PROM
 - Dynamic shoulder stability
 - Gradual restoration of shoulder strength & power
 - Gradual return to functional activities
 - Week 10
 - Continue stretching & PROM (as needed to maintain full ROM)
 - May begin IR @ 90 degrees ABD beyond 30 degrees

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- Continue dynamic stabilization drills
- Progress strengthening/isotonic/tubing program
 - ER/IR tubing
 - ER sidelying
 - Lateral raises* (AROM only)
 - Full can in scapular plane* (AROM only)
 - Prone rowing
 - Prone horizontal abduction
 - Elbow flexion/bicep curls
 - Elbow extension
- *Patient must be able to elevate arm without shoulder or scapular hiking before initiating isotonics; if unable, continue glenohumeral dynamic stabilization exercises
- *If physician permits, may initiate light functional activities
 - Week 14
 - Continue all exercise listed above
 - Progress to independent home exercise program (fundamental shoulder exercises)
- Phase IV: Advanced Strengthening Phase (Week 15 - 22)
 - Goals
 - Maintain full non-painful ROM
 - Enhance functional use of UE
 - Improve muscular strength & power
 - Gradual return to functional activities
 - Continue ROM & stretching to maintain full ROM
 - Self-capsular stretches
 - Progress shoulder strengthening exercises
 - Fundamental shoulder exercises
 - Continue all exercises listed above

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- Phase V: Return to Activity Phase (Week 23 - 30)
 - Goals
 - Gradual return to strenuous work activities
 - Gradual return to recreational sport activities
 - Continue fundamental shoulder exercise program (at least 4 times weekly)
 - Continue stretching, if motion is tight
 - May initiate interval sport program (i.e. golf, etc)