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ROTATOR CUFF REPAIR (Rehabilitative Guidelines)
Revised July 2003

****Patients who have a massive tear repaired will have their protocol modified as below**

Post-op Day 1 – Week 3

No shoulder AROM Immobilizer with abductor pillow x 4-6 weeks
 POD 2 – Remove pain pump and change dressing
 Hand squeezing exercises
 Elbow and wrist AROM
 Modified pendulum
 PROM/AAROM in supine with wand or assist of other hand
 – Flexion to 90 degrees
 – Abduction to 90 degrees
 Supervised pulley to 90 degrees flexion and abduction
 Shoulder shrugs, scapular retraction exercises
 Begin stationary bike as tolerated
 Ice pack PRN
 Sleep with pillow under arm for comfort

Goals – Pain control, AAROM to 90 degrees in abduction and flexion

Weeks 3 – 6

No shoulder Continue immobilizer x 4-6 weeks
AROM Standard pendulum
 ****Continue modified pendulum for massive tear repair**
 Resisted elbow/wrist exercises (light dumbbell)
 AAROM Flexion and Abduction with wand or pulley in pain-free range
 May progress past 90 degrees as tolerated
 AAROM ER as tolerated
 AAROM IR as tolerated if no subscapularis repair
 – May begin to put hand slowly behind back and slide up as tolerated
 1-2 Finger isometrics
 Continue stationary bike

Goals – AAROM to 120 flexion and abduction

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Weeks 6 – 9

AROM, AAROM as needed
UBE with low resistance forward and backward
Begin rotator cuff Theraband exercises
Standing rows with Theraband
Initiate shoulder stabilization exercises
Prone scapular retraction exercises
Continue stationary bike
Pool walking/running – no UE resistive devices

Goals – Full AROM

Weeks 9 – 12

PROM as needed to restore full functional ROM
Cont Theraband exercises with increased resistance as tolerated
Body Blade
Ball toss with arm at side using lightest ball
Push-up progression against the wall
Abdominal crunches
UBE
Elliptical trainer
Treadmill walking/jogging
Pool therapy – with UE resistive devices

Goals – 50 wall push-ups

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Months 3 – 6

Continue push-up progression program
Continue strengthening and stabilization exercises as needed
Fitter board on hands
Begin weight training with light resistance
Gravitrone – pull-ups and dips
Sit-up progression
Begin running progression program on treadmill and progress to track
Pool – begin swimming laps

Goals – Shoulder strength WNL and equal bilaterally
Pass APFT at 6 months

No contact sports until 6 months post-op

Reference: Brotzman,SB: Handbook of Orthopaedic Rehabilitation. Mosby, St. Louis, Missouri, 1996