

Posterior Stabilization/ MDI Postoperative Shoulder Protocol

(Capsulorrhaphy with or without labral repair)

POSTOPERATIVE PHASE I:

Acute Phase (0-4 Weeks)

RANGE OF MOTION

- Immobilizer in ER (gunslinger) at all times for posterior repair, neutral position for MDI
- AAROM in scaption with elbow at 90° with food scapular control
- Closed chain bowing and pendulums
- Passive towel slides or chair roll with elbow at 90° in scaption and ABD
- ER as tolerated, avoid IR for posterior stabilizations
- Elbow and wrist flexion/extension
- Codman's for shower to wash axilla
- Soft tissue work by PT (especially anterior structures, thoracic mobilization and postural education)
- OK to use hand from eyes to thighs

STRENGTH

- Focus on correct scapular position, may have to manually cue patient
- Sternal lift, scapular squeeze (retraction/depression) and scapular clocks
- Lawnmower starts

Basic Guideline

1. Shoulder immobilizer worn in gunslinger position for 4-6 weeks, neutral for MDI
2. Avoid forward flexion for 3 weeks
3. No internal rotation movements past neutral for 3 weeks
4. Limit active motions to scapular plane or abduction, with bias toward external rotation
5. Avoid horizontal adduction for 6 weeks
6. Begin active internal rotation in scaption at 3 weeks and reaching behind at 6 weeks

- Basic lumbopelvic and core strengthening (step-ups, lunges, grid lunges, etc., in sling)
- Gentle active humeral head depression (ball/table)
- Isometric extension (low row)

CARDIOVASCULAR

- Treadmill, recumbent bike, StairMaster® and elliptical trainer with sling

*If you have any problems or questions,
please call your doctor's office (8am-5pm).*

Answering service for after hours.

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POSTOPERATIVE PHASE II:

Recovery Phase (4-8 Weeks)

RANGE OF MOTION

- Discontinue sling at 4-6 weeks except for crowds/school
- AAROM/AROM for scaption at ER in scaption. Start FF at 6 weeks.
- Towel slides and closed chain bowing with trunk rotation (FF, ABD, scaption and horizontal ABD)
- No horizontal ADD
- Pendulums
- Fitness ball rolls, advance to ball/wall rolls
- Assisted wall slides

STRENGTH

- Continue and progress scapular stabilization program
- Advance kinetic chain strengthening. Adding reach and punch in scaption with lunges (fencing).
- Closed chain inferior humeral head glide at 90°
- Ball table rolls to ball wall rolls
- Weight bearing table rocking (weight shifts: lateral, forward, back, diagonals)
- Bilateral rubber tubing in ER with cervical spine in neutral
- One arm pull-downs with tubing
- Isometric low row, rowing and lawnmowers, all with tubing
- Standing pivot prone and prone pivot prone (robbery)
- Scapular and short range GH PNF patterns
- Wall walks
- Closed chain scapular retraction pushup wall/table
- Closed chain wall slides forearms on wall
- Isometric wall angels in scaption at 30°/60°/90° (full ABD for posterior stabilizations)

CARDIOVASCULAR

- Same as protective phase without sling as tolerated

POSTOPERATIVE PHASE III:

Functional Phase (8-12 Weeks)

RANGE OF MOTION

- Reestablish normal scapulohumeral rhythm in all planes
- AROM/AAROM in all planes to regain full ROM
- Posterior stabilizations avoid horizontal ADD and IR behind back
- Prayer stretch
- Passive stretch: especially pecs, lats, IR, ER
- Increased soft tissue work PRN (pecs, lats, subscap)
- Joint mobilization PRN
- Posterior capsule/cuff stretch PRN (GIRD sleeper stretch)
- Wall washer

STRENGTH

- Scapular control optimized
- Progress full kinetic chain lumbopelvic/scapulothoracic/glenohumeral program
- Reverse corner pushups below 90° elevation
- Closed chain scapular retraction in pushup position from table to floor
- Lat pull-downs progress from tubing to weights
- Weight shifting: all 4s to floor progression
- Closed chain perturbations
- Side-lying ER, prone ER
- Scaption raises
- Full-range PNF patterns
- PNF patterns with TheraBand® (stand, sit, prone on fitness ball)
- Seated rows with hip and lumbar flexion
- Pail dumps
- Add core stabilization to standing exercises and progress single leg -> 2 legs on bubble -> 1 leg on bubble

CARDIOVASCULAR

- Progress to impact (jogging at 3 months)
- Cross-country ski machine
- Swim at 3 months if ROM and scapular mechanics are normal

POSTOPERATIVE PHASE IV:

Performance Phase (12-24 Weeks)

RANGE OF MOTION

- ROM should be full or near full
- Soft tissue work, joint mobilizations, stretching PRN
- Corner stretch, doorway stretch, GIRD side-lying posterior capsule at 70°/90°/120° elevation PRN

STRENGTH

- Weight shifting: floor progression
- Single arm rows and pull-down progression – rotation to same side, hip/knee flexion to same side, hip/knee flexion/rotation to same side, 2 legs on bubble -> 1 leg on bubble
- Pushup progression (Table -> floor on knees -> abdominals on fitness ball -> thighs on fitness ball -> ankles on fitness ball)
- Fitness ball weight shifting
- Fitness ball walkouts on hands progression
- Bilateral ER with TheraBand® weight bearing on elbows
- Bilateral rows and pull-downs
- Iron cross and snatch with TheraBand®
- Add weights to step up, step down, lunge with reach and punch series
- Add weights to cuff specific exercises
- Mock throwing or tennis strokes -> to TheraBand® -> to weights
- Plyo ball progression
- Ball bounce on wall -> single and double arm
- Open chain perturbations
- Sport- or work-specific drill for endurance, quickness, agility, strength and power
- Sport-specific movement patterns (e.g., swimmer's prone, divers with fitness ball overhead against ceiling, step-down/lunge series)

Postoperative Shoulder Protocol (8/11) Written by Ben Rubin, M.D.