

Arthroscopic Rotator Cuff Repair
Standard Postoperative Rehabilitation Protocol
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General Notes:

- Sling used for 6 weeks total
 - o Removed only for showers and, when comfortable, meals
 - o Instructions for self care and sling removal can be found on drjeffreywitty.com
- Patients should perform home stretching at least 3 times a day
- Some of these protocols may be slower than others the therapist may have used previously. The below protocols are designed to maximize tissue healing and have been shown to have low rates of long term stiffness to the shoulder. The main goal is for the tendon to heal. Any stiffness that develops can be addressed with therapy with low rates of stiffness long term.
- **If a biceps tenodesis has been performed:**
 - o POW 0 – 4 elbow PROM only
 - o POW 4 – 6 begin gentle AROM
 - o POW 6 and beyond, begin gentle progressive strengthening
- **If a subscapularis tear has also been performed:**
 - o POW 0 – 6, external rotation PROM to neutral only
 - o POW 6 – 12, progress external/internal rotation AAROM/AROM/PROM as tolerated
 - o POW 12 and beyond, begin progressive resistance
- **NO pendulums or traction used throughout protocol**
- Use ice as much as possible 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off especially after exercise.
- No anti-inflammatory medication (aleve, motrin, advil etc) for 6 weeks from day of surgery.

	Weightbearing	Sling	ROM	Exercise
Phase I Week 0 - 4	NWB	All times except shower and can remove during meals if comfortable	<u>Elbow:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PROM only if biceps tenodesis - AROM with arm at side if no biceps tenodesis <u>Shoulder:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No motion 	No Pendulums Isometric scapular retraction. Can be done in sling. Ball squeezes throughout day
Phase II Week 5 - 6	NWB	As above	<u>Elbow:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gentle AROM of elbow at side <u>Shoulder:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SUPINE PROM scaption 0 – 90 - PROM ER at side 0 – 30 	Continue Phase I No other exercise

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Phase III Week 6 - 8	Limit to carry less than 5lbs with arm at side.	No sling	<u>Elbow:</u> - Gentle AROM of elbow at side <u>Shoulder:</u> - Progress PROM as tolerated	Continue Phase II <u>Elbow:</u> No strengthening <u>Shoulder:</u> No strengthening
Phase IV POW 8 - 12	Increase as comfort allows at the side	No sling	Continue Phase III. <u>Elbow:</u> - Gentle AROM of elbow at side <u>Shoulder:</u> - Progress PROM as tolerated - Start AAROM and progress to AROM as motion improves	Continue Phase III.
Phase V Week 12 - 16	Continue Phase IV	No sling	<u>Elbow:</u> - AROM <u>Shoulder:</u> - Normalize motion - PROM - AAROM/AROM Add doorway stretches. Pec major/minor stretch	Continue Phase IV <u>Shoulder:</u> Add progressive resistance Wall washes Resisted IR/ER Scapular control: Kibler scapular rehab exercises - low row - lawnmower -inferior glides Restore core, trunk, shoulder

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				kinetic chain No exercise with rapid acceleration
Phase VI Week 16 - 24	Continue Phase V	No sling	Normalize motion	Return to gym. Avoid exercise with rapid acceleration and high impact
Phase VI Week 24 and beyond	Continue Phase V	No sling	Continue Phase V	Return to full activities/sports. Work with position coach etc to optimize kinetic for return to competitive play.

Kibler Scapula Exercises:

- starts POW12
- [Knee Surg Sports Traumatol Arthrosc \(2016\) 24:390–397](#)

Adapted from:

- Arndt et al Orthop Traumatol Surg Res 2012
- Kim et al AJSM 2012
- Cuff et al JSES 2012
- Ma et al Arthroscopy 2012
- Keener et al JBJS 2014
- Koh et al JBJS 2014
- Lee et al Arthroscopy 2012
- Chang et al AJSM 2014
- Kluczynski et al AJSM 2015
- Kibler et al Knee Surg Sports Traumatol Arthrosc 2016