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Rotator Cuff Repair Rehab Protocol

This protocol is based on maintaining range of movement in the first phase and then gradually building strength in the middle to the last phase.

Pre-op

ROM Exercises

Maximise shoulder strength of deltoid, intact cuff muscles and scapula stabilisers.

Day 1 - 3 weeks

Mastersling with body belt

Wrist/hand/finger exercises

Elbow flex/ext, pro/supination

Shoulder girdle exercises

Scapula setting exercises

Pendular exercises

Passive ROM in all directions as tolerated

Level 1 Exercises

3-6 weeks:

Do not force or stretch

Gentle isometric exercises in neutral as pain allows

Wean off sling

Begin active assisted exercises ensuring glenohumeral movement, not scapulothoracic.

Level 2 Exercises

6 weeks +:

Progress to full active exercises in all ranges

Begin rotator cuff strengthening (pain free)

Closed chain exercise

Begin stretching the capsule

Begin proprioceptive exercises

Level 3-4 Exercises

	Milestones	
4	> 50% pre op passive	

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Weeks	ROM	
6 Weeks	Active assisted ROM equal to pre op level	
12 Weeks	Active ROM equal to pre op level	

Exercises See Post-Operative Exercises

Return to functional activities

- Driving** 6 Weeks
- Swimming** Breaststroke: 6 weeks
Freestyle: 3 months
- Golf** 3 Months
- Lifting** 3 Months (Then guided by the strength of the individual patient)
- Return to work** Sedentary job: 3 weeks
Manual job: Guided by Surgeon

Level 1 Exercises

Level 1 = < 20% intensity

Not all of the exercises have been investigated and the information is intended only as a guide when choosing exercises.

Guide: R=ROM S=Strengthening P=Proprioception C=Core

EXERCISES	R	S	P	C
Pendulum Exercise	X			
Flexion in side lying	X		X	



A V A N T H I M A N D A L E S O N
 M B B S (H O N S) , B M E D S C I , F R A C S , F A O R T H A
 H A N D A N D U P P E R L I M B S U R G E O N

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Flexion using the ball	X		X	
Abduction using the physio ball	X		X	
Flexion on the table	X		X	
Abduction on the table	X		X	
External rotation on the table	X			
Flexion in standing	X		X	
Abduction in standing	X		X	
Pulleys	X			
Posterior capsular stretch	X			
Forward flexion with exercise bar	X			
Prayer Position			X	
Balance point in lying flexion	X	X	X	

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Balance point in lying abduction	X	X	X	
Rotation with bar lying	X		X	
Rotation with bar at 90 degrees flexion	X		X	
Diagonal with Bar	X		X	
External rotation in Standing	X		X	
Internal rotation in Standing	X		X	
External Rotation Lying	X		X	
4 Point kneeling over physio ball			X	

Level 2 Exercises

Level 2 = 21-40% intensity

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Not all of the exercises have been investigated and the information is intended only as a guide when choosing exercises.

Guide: R=ROM S=Strengthening P=Proprioception C=Core

EXERCISES	R	S	P	C
Isometric exercises in sitting external rotation		X		
Isometric exercises in sitting abduction		X		
Isometric exercises in sitting internal rotation		X		
Isometric exercises in sitting external rotation through range		X		
Unilateral shoulder flexion in 4 point kneeling		X	X	X

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Level 3 Exercises

Level 3 Exercises = > 40% intensity

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Guide: R=ROM S=Strengthening P=Proprioception C=Core

EXERCISES	R	S	P	C
Theraband isometric external rotation long lever		X	X	
Diagonal pattern exercise with theraband		X	X	
Diagonal pattern exercise with free weights and step		X	X	X
Dynamic hug with theraband and ball		X	X	X
Diagonal pattern abduction in elevation to adduction with exercise band		X	X	

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Diagonal pattern adduction in elevation to abduction with exercise band		X	X	
Diagonal pattern adduction to abduction in elevation with exercise band		X	X	
Diagonal pattern abduction to adduction in elevation with exercise band		X	X	

References:

1. <https://www.shoulderdoc.co.uk/article/77>