

Subacromial Decompression **Physical Therapy Protocol**

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Patient Name: _____

Date of Surgery: _____

__Phase I (0-4 wks): Period of protection: Sling is worn for 1-2 weeks, then only for comfort at night. No strengthening until after this phase to prevent irritation to subacromial space.

Weeks 0-1: Formal PT is not mandatory.

- Sling at all times (except for hygiene and pendulums).
- Home exercises only (pendulums, elbow + wrist ROM, grip strengthening).
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Weeks 1-4: Begin formal PT (2-3 x/wk).

- D/C sling.
- ROM:
 - Shoulder: Advance PROM → AAROM → AROM in all planes as tolerated (exceptions: abduction and cross-body adduction depending on procedures performed (see above)).
 - Goals: full AROM if possible
 - Elbow: PROM → AAROM → AROM (flex/ext/sup/pron) as tolerated
 - Goals: full passive ROM (flex/ext)
- Strengthening: None, except grip strengthening.

__Phase II (4-8 wks): Advance motion and begin strengthening.

- ROM: Advance AROM for elbow and shoulder in all directions with passive stretching at end ranges.
 - If SAD performed, avoid abduction until after 6 wks.
 - If DCR done, avoid cross-body adduction until after 8 wks.
 - Goals: full AROM elbow and shoulder by 8-10 wks.
- Strengthening (only 3x/wk to avoid cuff tendonitis):
 - Start periscapular and cuff/deltoid isometrics at side; progress to bands as tolerated.

__Phase III (8-12 wks): Begin more aggressive strengthening and progress to sport-specific/occupation-specific rehab.

- ROM: Aggressive passive stretching at end ranges. Advance to full active ROM if not already achieved.
- Strengthening/Activities:
 - Continue cuff/deltoid/periscapular strengthening:
 - Advance as tolerated from isometrics → bands → light weights (1-5lbs) w/8-12 reps x 2-3 sets for cuff, deltoid, scapular stabilizers (Only do this 3x/wk to avoid cuff tendonitis)
 - Begin eccentrically resisted motions, plyometrics (weighted ball toss), proprioception (body blade)

Phase IV (3-6 months): Transition to sport-specific/occupation-specific rehab.

- ROM: Continue aggressive passive stretching at end ranges.
- Strengthening/Activities:
 - Continue cuff/deltoid/periscapular strengthening:
 - Maintain light weights (1-5lbs) w/8-12 reps x 2-3 sets for cuff, deltoid, scapular stabilizers (Only do this 3x/wk to avoid cuff tendonitis)
 - Advance eccentrically resisted motions, plyometrics (weighted ball toss), proprioception (body blade)
 - Sports-related rehab and advanced conditioning
 - @ 4.5 months, may throw from the pitcher's mound
 - @ 6 months, return to collision sports
 - Heavy labor once full-strength/MMI reached (usually by 6 months)



