

Rotator cuff repair protocol/philosophy

There are more issues with healing than stiffness after rotator cuff repairs. I would like the patient to remain as passive as possible with their shoulder rom in the first 6 weeks. Large/massive tears may not begin therapy until week 6 depending on quality of the tissue at the time of surgery.

0-6 weeks

Passive glenohumeral rom, ok to work on scapularthoracic rom if cuff remains passive

Work towards 140 degrees of flexion and 30 degrees of ER with the arm at the side

Pendulums ok

AAROM of elbow, hand, wrist

6-12 weeks

AAROM of the shoulder- I tell patient nothing heavier than a coffee cup when lifting at home.

Progress to full rom

12+weeks

RTC strengthening

AAROM of shoulder for any residual stiffness

Manual laborers should expect to return to full duty by 5-6 months

Strength, endurance and rom will improve for 9-12 months.