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CAPITAL PERFORMANCE SURGERY

REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

Arthroscopic rotator cuff repair (+/- biceps tenodesis/tenotomy)

Instructions for Physiotherapist:

EQUAL ICING AND REST/WORK RATIO IS IMPORTANT. SIGNIFICANT PAIN SHOULD NOT OCCUR WITH ANY ACTIVITY DURING REHAB WORK OR LAST LONGER AFTER REHAB. IF THIS OCCURS, MODIFICATION OR RE-EVALUATION NEEDS TO BE UNDERTAKEN.

Dressings and sutures:

- The dressings on your shoulder should be left in place and kept dry when showering for 3 days.
- After 3 days you can remove your dressings and shower normally but do NOT scrub the incisions.
- Apply Band-Aids over the incisions to keep them clean once the initial dressing has been removed.
- Sutures will be removed at your first post-op visit (approx. 2 weeks post-op).
- Do NOT soak the shoulder (i.e. hot tub / bath, etc) until 2-4 weeks after your sutures are removed and the incisions are well healed.

Pain and swelling:

- Local anesthetic has been placed into your shoulder – this will wear off in 6-8 hours after surgery.
- You have been provided with a prescription for pain medications that when used together will provide the most effective pain relief after your surgery.
- Use an ice pack/cold therapy system for 20 mins every hour while awake to help with pain/swelling.
- It is common to have some spotting through the dressings following surgery. Place an additional dressing over the area if this occurs.
- The incisions may continue to "leak" fluid after removal of the initial dressing – this is common and should not raise concern. Place an additional bandage or Band-Aids over the incisions to help them heal. Keep the incisions clean and dry.
- DO NOT apply any ointments or topical creams to the incisions until they are completely healed – this will risk the incisions becoming infected.
- When sitting or lying, keep your arm elevated with several pillows placed under the elbow to help decrease swelling and relieve pain. This can safely be done while wearing the sling.

Shoulder sling:

- Shoulder sling should be worn for a total of 6 weeks.
- You will be provided with a standard (fabric) shoulder sling immediately after your surgery at the hospital. You do not need to bring a sling on the day of surgery.
- You may take your sling off for exercises as directed throughout the day, when you are seated with your arm supported, and for hygiene.
- If your sling has a waist strap you may use it if you find this more comfortable. You do not have to use the waist strap.

Driving:

- Driving a motor vehicle is NOT allowed while wearing a sling.
- You must avoid driving until your arm is strong enough to react quickly and safely.

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Physiotherapy:

- The sling should be worn at all times for 6 weeks, except when doing exercises and for hygiene.
- No active motion – for 6 weeks (according to surgery specific precautions).
- No resisted exercises – for at least 12 weeks (according to surgery specific precautions).
- No pushing, pulling, or heavy lifting for at least 12 weeks.
- Long term: Limit forceful, jerking movements (i.e., starting outboard motor) and limit repetitive impact/loading (i.e., chopping wood).
- Surgery Specific Precautions:
  - ❑ Biceps Tenodesis: perform passive-assisted elbow flexion/extension during the first 4 weeks to protect the repair.
- When seated you may use your elbow, hand and wrist for light activities of daily living. This includes use of your cell phone, light typing and eating. No heavy lifting, pushing or pulling using your operative arm greater than 1 pound until advised by your surgeon or physiotherapist.
- Physiotherapy should begin 6 weeks following the surgery.
- You may select a physiotherapy location and physiotherapist of your choosing. If you do not have insurance coverage, please let us know and we can direct you to a publicly funded option.

Sleeping:

- It is often most comfortable to sleep in an upright position in a recliner or propped up by pillows in bed. Placing a pillow under the arm for support may offer some comfort. When you feel able to do so, you may lie flat on your back or on your other shoulder to sleep. It is often many months for you to feel comfortable enough to lay on your repaired shoulder.
- If you are in a stable position and do not move regularly overnight, feel free to remove the sling strap around your neck to sleep. Otherwise, it is best advised that you wear your sling overnight to sleep. If the sling is too uncomfortable to sleep, another strategy is to wear a close-fitting t-shirt overnight where you do not put your arm through the sleeve hole and keep it tucked in close to the body.

Return to activity guidelines (school/work/sports)

- These are estimated guidelines only and will depend on individual improvement and activity requirements:
  - Sedentary desk work (no use of surgical arm on regular basis) = 1 to 3 weeks (depending on pain control and mobility)
  - Light work (below shoulder level) = 3 months
  - Heavier or labor type work = 6 months
  - Sports = please review with your surgeon in follow-up (depends on the involvement of your operative arm).

- If you need forms for work or school to be completed, bring them to your follow-up visit or submit them to the office administrative assistant **Ashley West** at awest@toh.ca
- It is very helpful if you complete your section of the form (name, date of birth, employee information, etc.) prior to submitting any forms to our office.
- You will be notified of the expected charge for form completion if applicable.

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☐ Phase I (0-2 weeks)

Goals:

- Protect the shoulder repair.
- Decrease post-op pain and swelling (can utilize ice/cooling device for 8-12 hours/day x 2 weeks).
- Educate patient on rehabilitation progression.

Sling:

- Worn at all times, except when under the supervision of the physiotherapist and when bathing.
- Should be worn for sleeping.

Suggested Exercises:

- Ice after exercise program x 15 min.
- Pendulum shoulder ROM exercises.
- Wrist/elbow ROM.

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☐ Phase II (2-6 weeks)

Goals:

- Protect the shoulder repair.
- Begin general activities of daily living (ADL's) (i.e., feeding, bathing, and dressing).
- Return to work: light duties (desk duties).

Sling:

- Worn at all times, except when performing pendulum ROM exercises, ADL's, desk duties and when bathing.
- Should be worn for sleeping.

Suggested Exercises:

- Ice after exercise program x 15 min.
- Start passive-assisted forward elevation of the shoulder to 90°.
- Continue pendulum shoulder ROM exercises.
- Continue wrist/elbow ROM.
- General fitness – may use stationary bike.

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☐ Phase III (6-12 weeks)

Goals:

- Achieve full active ROM in all planes.
- Begin cross training to maintain general fitness.
- Return to work: modified duties (avoid heavy lifting and overhead activity).

Sling:

- May discontinue.

Suggested Exercises:

- Begin active ROM and continue passive and active-assisted ROM exercises in all planes as necessary to achieve full ROM.
- Begin passive and active-assisted ROM exercises (i.e., supine, pulleys, wall crawls, and cane exercises) - forward elevation, abduction, external rotation, internal rotation (behind back) and internal rotation in 90° of abduction (NO Forceful Passive ROM).
- Begin manual glenohumeral and scapular mobilization.
- Begin GENTLE isometric strengthening exercises (with surgery specific precautions):
  - Supraspinatus Repair: IR, ER (No elevation or abduction).
  - Infraspinatus/Teres Repair: IR, elevation, abduction (No ER).
  - Subscapularis Repair: ER, elevation, abduction (No IR).
- May begin aquatic shoulder therapy.
- General fitness – continue to use stationary bike.
- Begin peri-scapular muscle strengthening: postural work, scapular retraction, protraction, elevation and depression.
- Continue wrist/elbow ROM (as necessary).

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☐ Phase IV (3-6 months)

Goals:

- Maintain/improve shoulder ROM.
- Increase shoulder strength.
- Progressive return to sport.
- Return to work: for manual and overhead occupations.

Sling:

- Already discontinued.

Suggested exercises:

- 3 months:
  - Begin Theraband strengthening exercises for RTC, progressing to strengthening exercises with free weights for all planes. Increase repetitions before increasing weight.
  - Begin overhead activity.
  - Begin swimming to increase shoulder strength at low resistance.
  - Begin putting and chipping for golf.
- 4.5 months:
  - Begin sport-specific strengthening exercises.
  - Begin low speed throwing / controlled racket sports / non-contact hockey.
  - Progress to swing with irons for golf.
- 6 months:
  - Begin high speed throwing / full swing racket sports / slap shots.
  - Progress to competitive throwing / racket sports / contact sports.
  - Progress to full swings with all clubs for golf.