

VCU Sports Medicine Clinic

Subacromial decompression repair protocol

This protocol is designed to serve as a patient guide for rehabilitation following a subacromial decompression procedure. Time frames allow for optimal healing and should be used as criteria for advancement along with a patient's functional ability.

Phase I (weeks 0-2)

Goals

1. Decrease pain and inflammatory response
2. Establish scapular awareness
3. Range of motion as tolerated
4. Prevent effects of immobilization

Exercises/therapies

1. Wear sling for 48 hours
2. Wound management
3. Passive range of motion and active assistive range of motion exercise as tolerated – pendulum, T-bar
4. C-spine, elbow and wrist assistive range of motion
5. Initiate scapular stabilization/shoulder retraction and core strengthening
6. Strengthening – **no resisted abduction for four weeks**, light strengthening until full range of motion/normal scapulohumeral rhythm achieved with submaximal intensity and isometrics
7. Modalities as needed

Phase II (weeks 2-6)

Goals

1. Eliminate shoulder pain
2. Work toward full range of motion
3. Improve neuromuscular control
4. Strength work below 90 degree elevation
5. Active forward flexion and abduction to horizontal by six weeks without hiking

Exercises

1. Full range of motion by six weeks
2. Active assistive range of motion and assistive range of motion exercises – begin to increase abduction with T-bar, pulleys, etc.
3. Strengthening – **no resisted abduction for four weeks**. Theraband scapular retraction variations, internal rotation, external rotation, FF as tolerated; quadruped activities, wall pushup, prone trunk extension variations, trunk rotation exercises, wall dribbles, others as indicated
4. Light proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation (PNF) and kinesthetic awareness drills
5. Core stability/trunk stabilization and cardiovascular exercise

Phase III (weeks 6-12)

Goals

1. Increase strength, endurance, power, neuromuscular control with overhead activities
2. Prepare for return to activity

3. No impingement upon exam
4. Painless and full range of motion by six weeks

Exercises

1. Aggressive stretching as needed
2. Strengthening in open kinetic chain, closed kinetic chain, eccentric and concentric loading, isokinetics and plyometrics (planks, chair dips, band diagonals, overhead pulls or throwing simulation, ball body weave, scaption, rocky punches, Swiss ball walk outs/pushups, others as indicated)
3. Core strengthening
4. Proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation (PNF) exercises

Phase III (weeks 12+)

Goals

1. Return to activity
2. Full range of motion and strength
3. Please note it can take up to nine months following surgery until post-op symptoms have settled

Exercises

1. Continue strengthening, increasing weight, endurance, speed, etc.
2. Lunges with loaded trunk rotation, full push-ups with or without variations, football press aways, medicine ball passes in supine position and standing, overhead press with squat to stand, side plank with variations