

REVERSE TOTAL SHOULDER REPLACEMENT

Post-Operative Physical Therapy Protocol



SCAN FOR THE
ONLINE VERSION



Stanford
MEDICINE

With subscapularis repair

Dear Colleague,

I appreciate your partnership in the rehabilitation of this very special patient of ours. I have instructed the patient that you will be using this protocol. My belief is that the biggest predictor of success is what the patient does at home and consistently. **They should view you not just as a therapist but as a highly educated and skilled teacher** and the patient *must* be an active participant in the rehab process.

To facilitate this, I have included a copy of the rehab protocols I would like the patient to focus on at each time point in the rehab process. Please assist me by encouraging and teaching our mutual patient their home exercises as well.

With your help and the active participation of our patient, I know we can have another fantastic shoulder.

Please do not hesitate to reach out directly to me and my team with any questions at any time.

Respectfully,



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	WEEKS 0-6: HOME EXERCISES	WEEKS 6-12: PROM → AAROM → AROM	MONTHS 3-12
Forward flexion	Pendulums only	Up to 90° <i>As tolerated</i>	Increase to full <i>Passive stretch at end ranges</i>
External rotation	Pendulums only	Up to 20° <i>As tolerated</i>	Increase to full <i>Passive stretch at end ranges</i>
Internal rotation / backward extension	None	No resisted IR or extension <i>Dislocation risk</i>	Resisted from 12 weeks

SUMMARY

Sling	6 weeks. Remove for home exercises and bathing only.
Motion	Home exercises only for 6 weeks. Weeks 6 to 12: PROM → AAROM → AROM as tolerated to 90° forward flexion and 20° external rotation. No manipulation.
Strengthening	Light resisted ER, FF, and ABD isometrics and bands from 6 weeks, concentric only. No resisted internal rotation or backward extension until 12 weeks. Eccentrics, plyometrics, and closed chain at 12 weeks.
Return to activities	Computer 4 weeks. Swimming at 4 to 6 months. Golf: chipping and putting at 4 months, full swing at 6 months. Tennis at 6 months; many patients do not return to tennis.

WEEKS 0–6

- Home exercises given after surgery: pendulums, elbow ROM, wrist ROM, grip strengthening.
- Remove the sling for home exercises and bathing only.

WEEKS 6–12

- PROM → AAROM → AROM as tolerated, except as below.
- Grip strengthening OK.
- Goals: increase ROM as tolerated to 90° forward flexion and 20° external rotation. No manipulation.
- Begin light resisted ER, FF, and ABD isometrics and bands, concentric motions only.
- **No scapular retractions with bands.**
- **No resisted internal rotation or backward extension until 12 weeks** (risks dislocation).

MONTHS 3–12

- Begin resisted internal rotation and backward extension (isometrics, bands): isometrics, then light bands, then weights.
- Advance strengthening as tolerated: 10 reps, 1 set per exercise for the rotator cuff, deltoid, and scapular stabilizers.
- Increase ROM to full with passive stretching at end ranges.
- Begin eccentric motions, plyometrics, and closed chain exercises at 12 weeks.

RETURN

- Computer at 4 weeks. Swimming at 4 to 6 months.
- Golf: chipping and putting at 4 months, full swing at 6 months. Tennis at 6 months; many patients do not return to tennis.
- Be mindful of bench press, military press, pull-downs behind the head, impact loading, and contact sports.

WEEK-BY-WEEK PROGRESSION

EXERCISE	1	2	3	4 (1 mo)	5	6	7	8 (2 mo)	9	10	12 (3 mo)	16	20	24 (6 mo)
Initial Exercises														
Pendulums														
Elbow and wrist ROM														
Grip strengthening														
Maintain sling														
Advanced Exercises														
PROM → AAROM → AROM to 90° flexion, 20° external rotation														
Light resisted ER, FF, ABD isometrics and bands (concentric only)														
Resisted internal rotation and backward extension														
Strengthening progression to weights														
ROM to full with passive stretch at end ranges														
Eccentrics, plyometrics, closed chain														
Return to Activities														
Computer														
Swimming														
Golf: chipping and putting														
Golf: full swing at 6 months														
Tennis at 6 months														

Home exercises only for the first 6 weeks. No resisted internal rotation or backward extension until week 12 because of dislocation risk.

This protocol is a general guideline and does not replace the clinical judgment of the treating therapist and surgeon. Please contact our office with any questions.