Chicago Orthopaedics & SPORTS MEDICINE, S.C.

ARTHROSCOPIC DECOMPRESSION PROTOCOL

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This rehabilitation protocol has been developed for the patient following an arthroscopic decompression surgical procedure. The arthroscopic decompression procedure is normally the result of clinical diagnosis of shoulder impingement syndrome. The protocol is divided into phases. Each phase is adaptable based on the individual and special circumstances. Following an arthroscopic decompression, the patient should avoid overhead activities for up to six weeks post-op to decrease the stress on the healing tissues and avoid recurrence of impingement symptoms.

Early passive range of motion is highly beneficial to enhance circulation within the joint to promote healing. The **overall goals** of the surgical procedure and rehabilitation are to:

- Control pain and inflammation
- Regain normal upper extremity strength and endurance
- Regain normal shoulder range of motion
- Achieve the level of function based on the orthopedist and patient goals

The physical therapy should be initiated within the first week following surgery. The supervised rehabilitation is to be supplemented by a home fitness program where the patient performs the given exercises at home or at a gym facility.

Important post-operative signs to monitor include:

- Swelling of the shoulder and surrounding soft tissue
- Abnormal pain, hypersensitive—an increase in night pain
- Severe range of motion limitations
- Weakness in the upper extremity musculature

Return to activity requires both time and clinical evaluation. To most safely and efficiently return to normal or high level functional activity, the patient requires adequate strength, flexibility, and endurance. Functional evaluation including strength and range of motion testing is one method of evaluating a patient's readiness to return to activity. Return to intense activities following an arthroscopic decompression requires both a strenuous strengthening and range of motion program along with a period of time to allow for tissue healing.

Symptoms such as pain, swelling, or instability should be closely monitored by the patient.

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Phase 1: Week 1-2
Decompression-Scope

WEEK	EXERCISE	GOAL
1-2	ROM	Gradual↑
	Wand exercises-in all planes as tolerated	
	Rope/Pulley (flex, abd, scaption)	
	Posterior capsule stretch	
	Towel internal rotation stretch	
	Pendulum exercises	
	Manual stretching and mobilization of post capsule	
	STRENGTH	
	Supine PNF patterns, punches	
	Initiate IR/ER, biceps, triceps with tubing	
	Initiate scapular stabilizer strengthening	
	Shoulder shrugs and retractions	
	Supine rhythmic stabilization at 60°, 90°, 120° flexion	
	MODALITIES	
	E-stim as needed	
	Ice 15-20 minutes	

GOALS OF PHASE:

- Promote healing of tissue
- Control pain and inflammation
- Gradual increase in ROM
- Enhance upper extremity strength
- Independent in HEP

Phase 2: Week 2-6
Decompression-Scope

WEEK	EXERCISE	GOAL
2-6	ROM	Full ROM
	Posterior capsule stretch	wk 6
	Towel internal rotation stretch	
	Manual stretching and joint mobs to reach goal	
	Wand exercises-in all planes	
	Rope/Pulley (flex, abd, scaption)	
	STRENGTH	
	Initiate UBE for warm-up	
	Initiate forward flexion, scaption, empty can	
	Prone abduction with ER, extension	
	Sidelying ER, prone ER at 90° abduction	
	Progress bicep and tricep work	
	Progress scapular stabilizer strengthening	
	Initiate push-up progression, seated rows	
	Initiate plyotoss chest pass and overhead pass	
	Progress rhythmic stabilization exercises to standing	
	MODALITIES	
	Ice 15-20 minutes	

GOALS OF PHASE:

- Minimize pain and swelling
- Achieve full ROM
- Progress upper extremity strength and endurance
- Enhance neuromuscular control

Phase 3: Week 6-12
Decompression-Scope

WEEK	EXERCISE
6-12	ROM
	Continue all ROM activities from previous phases
	Posterior capsule stretch
	Towel internal rotation stretch
	Manual stretching and Grade II-III joint mobs to reach goal
	STRENGTH
	Continue all strengthening from previous phases increasing resistance and repetitions
	UBE for strength and endurance
	Initiate isokinetic IR/ER at 45° abduction at high speeds
	Progress push-up from wall, to table, to floor
	Initiate ER with 90° abduction with tubing
	Progress overhead plyotoss for dynamic stabilization
	Progress rhythmic stabilization throughout range of motion
	Initiate lat pulldowns and bench press
	Progress PNF to high speed work
	Initiate plyoball figure 8 stabilizations
	MODALITIES
	Ice 15-20 minutes

GOALS OF PHASE:

- Full painless ROM
- Maximize upper extremity strength and endurance
- Maximize neuromuscular control
- Normalize arthrokinematics
- Clinical examination with **no** impingement signs

Phase 4: Week 12-24
Decompression-Scope

WEEK	EXERCISE
12-24	ROM
	Continue all ROM activities from previous phases
	Posterior capsule stretch
	Towel internal rotation stretch
	Grade III-IV joint mobs as needed to reach goal
	STRENGTH
	Continue with all strengthening exercises from previous phases increasing weight and repetitions
	Continue total body work out for overall strength
	Initiate light plyometric program
	Initiate military presses in front of neck
	Initiate and progress sport specific and functional drills
	Initiate interval throwing program
	MODALITIES
	Ice 15-20 minutes as needed

GOALS OF PHASE:

- Maximize upper extremity strength and endurance
- Maximize neuromuscular control and arthrokinematics
- Return to sports specific training/functional training