For information regarding the MOON Shoulder Group, speak to your surgeon or contact:
Rosemary Sanders
4200 Medical Center East
1215 21st Avenue South
Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Nashville TN 37232-8300
Rosemary.A.Sanders@Vanderbilt.Edu
www.MOONShoulder.com

POST-OPERATIVE ROTATOR CUFF REPAIR PROTOCOL
Home Program

BLUE PROTOCOL
Delayed Therapy

MOON SHOULDER GROUP

Version 1.0 All Illustrations by Jasper Richardson.
Using the diary, please keep track each time you do therapy for your shoulder. Please answer whether you do your therapy with a therapist or at home for each day. If you have comments, please write them on the diary.

Introduction

The MOON Shoulder Group is a group of shoulder experts who study the best ways to treat patients with rotator cuff tears. The treatment program in this book is based on the best available evidence. When no information was available, the MOON Shoulder Group experts came up with an agreement for treatment.

Do not add or skip any part of this program. If you have concerns, please contact your doctor.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

Icing
Patients are urged to ice after surgery.

Exercise Program
Therapy is to begin 6 weeks after surgery. Exercises should be done once per day either at home or with a therapist. The exercise program is divided into four sections. Do not move into the next section until the correct time after surgery.
General Instructions

**Activity Limits**
Showering: 48 Hours
Deskwork: When comfortable with sling
Driving: 6 weeks
Using arm for Activities of Daily Living: 6 weeks
Using arm to reach overhead: 12 weeks
Using arm to reach behind back: 6 weeks
Using arm to carry objects: 6 weeks
Pushing/Pulling: 6 weeks
Sport/Heavy Activity: When finished with therapy program

**Exercise Program**
Therapy is to begin 6 weeks after surgery. Exercises should be done each day at home or with a therapist. The program is four sections. *Do not move on to the next section until the correct time after surgery.*

**Rehab Diary**
Please keep track of therapy visits and exercises done at home in Rehab Diary. Please bring the diary to each visit.

**Questions/Concerns**
If you have questions or concerns, please contact your doctor.

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**Phase 4: Resisted Exercises (18-22 Weeks after Surgery)**

**Phase 4: Resisted Exercises 18-22 Weeks.**
These exercises include light stretching.

**SHOULDER STRETCHING**
Stretching should be done daily. Hold each stretch for 15 seconds, rest for 15 seconds, and repeat 5 times. Begin with gentle stretching. After 22 weeks, aggressive stretching may be used if needed.

- **SHOULDER STRETCHING**
  - Place hands or forearms at shoulder level in a corner of a room. Lean forward into corner and hold.
  - Hold injured arm over shoulder with towel. Hold bottom of the towel with healthy arm. Slowly pull downward with healthy arm until gentle stretch is felt in back of shoulder.
  - Bring injured arm across front of body. Hold elbow with other arm. Gently flex the bent arm which will pull the other arm across the chest until a stretch is felt in the back of the shoulder.
  - Lie on your side on a flat surface. Bring injured arm across the front of your body. Push down on hand towards table. Gently pull across chest until a stretch is felt in the back of shoulder.
**Phase 4: Resisted Exercises (18-22 Weeks after Surgery)**

*Phase 4: Resisted Exercises 18-22 Weeks.*
These exercises are for strengthening.

**RESISTED SCAPULA STRENGTHENING**

Strengthening exercises should be done 10-15 times, followed by 2 minutes of rest, and repeated as 3-4 sets. These should be done 3 days each week.

- **Fasten elastic to a stable object, pull elastic back and squeeze shoulder blades together.**
- **Stand straight up. Keep your elbows straight while pulling the elastic band backwards, trying to reach behind you.**
- **Lie on your back, elbow locked straight, arms stretched up towards the ceiling with weights in hand. Push arms up towards the ceiling as far as possible.**
- **Slightly bend hips and knees and support upper body with other arm as shown. Lift arm up, raising elbow to shoulder height.**

**Phase 1: Passive Motion (6-10 Weeks after Surgery)**

*Phase 1: Passive Range of Motion 6-10 Weeks*
Passive range of motion is to begin 6 weeks after surgery. The therapist will move the arm through a comfortable range of motion while the patient is lying down. Motions include raising the arm in front of the body, turning the arm out to the side of the body, and raising the arm up and to the side—all within a comfortable range. These exercises are done with each therapy visit, three times each week.

Plus, pendulum exercises can be started during this time. These can be done at home, twice each day.

- **Fasten elastic to a stable object, pull elastic back and squeeze shoulder blades together.**
- **Stand straight up. Keep your elbows straight while pulling the elastic band backwards, trying to reach behind you.**
- **Lie on your back, elbow locked straight, arms stretched up towards the ceiling with weights in hand. Push arms up towards the ceiling as far as possible.**
- **Slightly bend hips and knees and support upper body with other arm as shown. Lift arm up, raising elbow to shoulder height.**

**PASSIVE RANGE OF MOTION**

The patient lies flat and relaxes. The therapist will move the arm. The patient should relax and should not flex any muscles while the therapist moves the arm. This should be done at each therapy visit, three times each week.

**PENDULUM EXERCISES**

Use the upper body to move arm by rocking the body. Go in a clockwise direction then counter clockwise. These exercises can be done twice each day.
Phase 1: Scapula Exercises (6-18 Weeks after Surgery)

*Phase 1: Scapula Stabilizer Exercises*
Scapula exercises begin after 6 weeks. These exercises should include raising the shoulders, lowering the shoulders, pressing the shoulder together, and apart. Six weeks after surgery, these can be done out of the sling until strengthening exercises begin, 18 weeks after surgery. These can be done daily.

**SCAPULA EXERCISES**
While sitting or standing bring shoulder up as you shrug, down as you lower the shoulder, together toward the spine, and apart. Practice upright posture. These can be done daily.

Phase 4: Resisted Exercises (18-22 Weeks after Surgery)

*Phase 4: Resisted Exercises 18-22 Weeks.*
After 18 weeks, the patient can begin strengthening. Resisted exercise uses elastic bands and/or hand weights. These should be done 3 days per week. Each exercise should be done 10-15 times followed by 2 minutes of rest, and repeated 3-4 times.

**ROTATOR CUFF STRENGTHENING**
With the arm tucked close to the body, pull the rubber tubing across your stomach. Turn around to pull the tubing away from your stomach. You may also lie on your healthy side with your injured side arm up, and your elbow bent holding a hand weight; move your hand away from your belly. Do 10-15 times, for 3-4 sets, for 3 days/week.

**DELTOID STRENGTHENING**
With the arm tucked close to the body, pull rubber tubing while doing forward punches. Turn around pull the tubing to the body. Do 10-15 times, for 3-4 sets, for 3 days/week.

**DO NOT DO FULL-CAN OR EMPTY-CAN EXERCISES!**
These place too much stress on the shoulder.
Phase 3: Isometric Exercise (14-18 Weeks after Surgery)

Phase 3: Isometric Exercises 14-18 Weeks
Beginning 14 weeks after surgery the patient can begin isometric exercises. Using a pillow or folded towel the patient pushes against the wall without moving the shoulder.

ISOMETRIC PUSH AND PULL
With a pillow against the wall, and the arm tucked close to the body, push forward with the fist, and push backward with the elbow. Hold while pushing for 15 seconds then rest for 30 seconds. Repeat this 10-15 times. This can be done daily.

ISOMETRIC EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL ROTATION
With a pillow against a wall, and the arm tucked close to the body, push against the wall with the back of the hand, and with the palm of the hand. Hold while pushing for 15 seconds then rest for 30 seconds. Repeat this 10-15 times. This can be done daily.

Phase 2: Active Assisted Motion (10 Weeks after Surgery)

Phase 2: Active Assisted Range of Motion 10 Weeks
Ten weeks after surgery the second phase starts with active assisted range of motion. The patient lies flat and uses the healthy arm (or a stick or cane) to move the injured arm up in front of the body, to the side beside the body, and up and to the side. These can be done daily.

LYING ACTIVE ASSISTED FORWARD ELEVATION
Using a stick or cane, the healthy arm will move the injured arm over the head.

LYING ACTIVE ASSISTED EXTERNAL ROTATION
Keep the injured arm tucked close to the body. Bend the elbow so the hand is pointed to the ceiling. Using a cane, the healthy arm moves the injured arm away from the body.

LYING ACTIVE ASSISTED ABDUCTION
While keeping the elbow of the injured arm straight, the healthy arm will move the injured arm out to the side of the body as high as comfortable.
Phase 2: Active Assisted Motion
*(11-14 Weeks after Surgery)*

**Phase 2: Active Assisted Range of Motion 11-14 Weeks**

Eleven weeks after surgery the patient’s back is propped up on a pillow. Using the healthy arm to move the injured arm with a cane or stick, the arm is moved up and in front of the body, to the side of the body, and up and to the side. After twelve weeks, these exercises can be done while sitting up or standing. These exercises can be done daily.

**45 DEGREE ACTIVE ASSISTED RANGE OF MOTION**

While propped on a pillow using a stick or cane, the healthy arm will move the injured arm over the head. The arm is moved in up and in front of the body, to the side of the body, and up and to the side. This begins 11 weeks after surgery and is done daily.

**UPRIGHT ACTIVE ASSISTED RANGE OF MOTION**

Twelve weeks after surgery using a stick or cane, the healthy arm will move the injured arm up and in front of the body, to the side of the body, and up and to the side while sitting up or standing. Using pulleys while sitting in a chair is also allowed at this time. These exercises should be done daily.

Phase 3: Active Motion
*(14-18 Weeks after Surgery)*

**Phase 3: Active Range of Motion 14-18 Weeks**

While still working on active assisted range of motion, active range of motion begins. Raise the arm(s) up in front of the body and up and to the side. These exercises can be done daily.

**ACTIVE RANGE OF MOTION**

While sitting up or standing, move the injured arm in front of the body and to the side of the body.

**ACTIVE RANGE OF MOTION**

It is important to not “hike” the shoulder. Place the hand from the healthy arm on the injured shoulder, or do these in front of a mirror to avoid this.