POST-OPERATIVE GUIDELINES FOR
ARTHROSCOPIC ROTATOR CUFF REPAIR
OF MEDIUM TEARS 1-3 CM

Please Note: The time period refers to the seven days of the particular week noted. As examples, Post-op Week 1 includes days 1-7 and Post-op Week 7 includes days 43-49.

A full description can be found at www.shoulders.md/handouts.htm

Post-op week 1:
- Pendulums
- Elbow, wrist, hand AROM (elbow only if no contraindications-SLAP repair, biceps repair/anchor, biceps tenodesis)
- Modalities (Ice, electrical stimulation)
- Avoid shoulder extension past neutral (use towel roll/pillow under elbow in supine), IR beyond stomach, lifting, pushing, pulling, carrying, AROM, and sleeping on the involved side.

Post-op week 2:
- Pendulums
- Gentle pain-free PROM for forward elevation and external rotation within surgeon’s ROM limits based off intra-operative assessment
- Supine AAROM external rotation with stick. Shoulder at 30-45 degrees of abduction and arm at least level with abdomen (use towel roll/pillow)
- Elbow, wrist, hand AROM (elbow only if no contraindications-SLAP repair, biceps repair/anchor, biceps tenodesis)
- Modalities (Ice, electrical stimulation)
- Avoid shoulder extension past neutral (use towel roll/pillow under elbow in supine), IR beyond stomach, lifting, pushing, pulling, carrying, AROM, and sleeping on the involved side.

*The initiation of physical therapy and the exact timing of progression during the rehabilitation process may vary.*
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Post-op week 3-4:
- PROM forward elevation and external rotation within ROM limits
- Supine AAROM ER with stick
- Self supine AAROM forward elevation within ROM limits
- Scapula control exercise by PT in side-lying: active-assisted/active/resistive (to begin to restore scapula stability/force couple)
- Continue elbow/wrist/hand AROM/gripping
- Modalities for pain/inflammation
- Continue to avoid extension, IR, lifting, pushing, pulling, carrying, AROM, and sleeping on the involved side.

Post-op week 5-6:
- Progress PROM
- Supine AAROM forward elevation with stick, continue AAROM ER with stick
- Pulley in scapula plane with quality ROM (no scapula hike), minimal pain/discomfort
- Sub-maximal isometrics of uninvolved tendons
- Scapula control exercise (manual resistance, scapula PNF).
- Continue to avoid extension, IR, lifting, pushing, pulling, carrying, AROM, and sleeping on the involved side.

Post-op week 7
- Strive to achieve full PROM
- Supine AAROM forward elevation with stick, continue AAROM ER with stick
- Pulley
- Isometrics
- Prone row, extension to neutral (no weight)
- Glenohumeral stabilization and rhythmic stabilization exercises in supine for forward elevation, IR/ER (to restore neuromuscular control and proprioception needed for dynamic stability of GH joint).
- Begin PROM/AAROM extension/IR
- Light bicep (if not contraindicated)/triceps strengthening

Post-op week 8-9
- Initiate AROM forward elevation in the scapula plane beginning with gravity eliminated positions (supine and side-lying) and progress according to quality of motion (semi-recumbent, sitting and/or standing). Avoid scapula hiking and begin with elbow flexed (short lever arm) and progress to elbow extended. Can begin with supported and progress to unsupported AROM exercises. (This is usually not begun any earlier and may begin later based on patient progress and quality of tissue repair).
- AROM Side-lying ER/IR (no weight)
- Continue week 7 program
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Post-op week 10-11:
- Initiate light resistance if normal AROM in these planes without abnormal or substituted movement patterns. Start with 1 lb. dumbbell and elastic band/tubing with least resistance:
  - Side-lying ER/IR
  - Prone extension/row
  - Scapula protraction supine
  - Elastic band/tubing for ER, IR, Extension to neutral, scapula retraction and when ready scapula punches/dynamic hug standing.
- AROM forward elevation in thumb-up “full can” position if no scapula hiking
- Stretch posterior shoulder/capsule (Sleeper stretch)
- Continue PROM/AAROM with stick as needed all planes
- Continue biceps/triceps strengthening

Post-op week 12-13
- Initiate light resisted forward elevation with thumb-up, “full can” position with dumbbell/band only when normal AROM has been achieved without substitution/scapula hike.
- UBE
- PROM and stretching as needed
- Begin PNF patterns
- Closed chain exercises
- Progress strengthening program

Post-op week 14-15
- Progress open and closed chain exercises as appropriate
- Maintain PROM and flexibility
- Begin light functional activity as appropriate and within surgeon’s guidelines
  - Return to work considerations
  - Sport specific activity