



TWIN CITIES ORTHOPEDICS

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NONSURGICAL ADHESIVE CAPSULITIS (FROZEN SHOULDER) REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

Phase 1: Weeks 0-8

Goals

- Relieve pain
- Restore motion

Restrictions

- None

Immobilization

- None

Pain control

- Reduction of pain and discomfort is essential for recovery
 - Medication – NSAIDs
 - Injection
 - Therapeutic modalities
 - Ice, ultrasound, HVGS
 - Moist heat before therapy, ice at conclusion

Shoulder motion

- Goals
 - Controlled, emphasized ROM exercises
 - ROM may be more aggressive when pain not a limiting factor
 - Focus on stretching at ROM limits
 - No restrictions on range, but communicate to avoid injury
- Exercises
 - Initial focus on forward flexion and external and internal rotation with the arm at the side, and the elbow at 90°
 - Active ROM exercises
 - Active-assisted ROM exercises
 - Passive ROM exercises
 - Home exercise program instituted from the beginning
 - Patients should perform 3-5 times per day
 - Sustained stretch of 15-30 seconds at end ROM in all planes

Criteria for Progression to Phase 2

- Improvement in shoulder discomfort
- Improvement of shoulder motion
- Satisfactory physical examination

Phase 2: Weeks 8-16

Goals

- Improve shoulder motion in all planes
- Improve strength and endurance of rotator cuff and scapular stabilizers

Pain control

- Reduction of pain and discomfort is essential for recovery
 - Medication – NSAIDs
 - Injection
 - Therapeutic modalities
 - Ice, ultrasound, HVGS
 - Moist heat before therapy, ice at conclusion

Shoulder motion

- Goals
 - 140° forward elevation
 - 45° external rotation at side
 - Internal rotation to T12
- Exercises
 - Active ROM
 - Active-assisted ROM
 - Passive ROM

Muscle strengthening

- Rotator cuff strengthening (3x/week, 8-12 reps for 3 sets)
 - Closed-chain isometrics with elbow at 90° and arm at side
 - Internal rotation
 - External rotation
 - Abduction
 - Forward elevation
 - Progress to light isotonic dumbbell exercises
 - Internal rotation
 - External rotation
 - Abduction
 - Forward elevation
- Strengthening of scapular stabilizers
 - Closed-chain strengthening exercises
 - Scapular retraction
 - Scapular protraction

- Scapular depression
 - Shoulder shrugs
- Progress to open chain
- Deltoid strengthening

Criteria for Progression to Phase 3

- Significant functional recovery of shoulder motion
 - Successful participation in activities of daily living
- Resolution of painful shoulder
- Satisfactory physical examination

Phase 3: 4 months - up

Goals

- Home maintenance exercise program
 - ROM exercises two times a day
 - Rotator cuff strengthening 3x per week
 - Scapular stabilizer strengthening 3x per week

Maximal Improvement

- Typical at 6-9 months after initiation of treatment

Warning Signals

- Loss of motion
- Continued pain

This protocol provides you with general guidelines for the rehabilitation of the patient with adhesive capsulitis (frozen shoulder).

The frequency of visits may be determined mutually by the patient and therapist, depending upon patient comfort level, progress, and understanding of the home program.

Specific changes in the program will be made by the physician as appropriate for the individual patient. Patients with progressive pain and/or persistent stiffness may be candidates for injection therapy and/or surgical treatment.

Questions regarding the progress of any specific patient are encouraged, and should be directed to Dr. Lervick at **952-456-7111**.

REFERENCE:

Clinical Orthopaedic Rehabilitation, 2nd edition. SB Brotzman, KE Wilk. Mosby 2003.