



**Rotator Cuff Repair**  
Dr. Bakker's Post-operative Protocol

**Important Instructions Following Surgery:**

- After surgery, you will be placed in an UltraSling, which was likely provided at a previous clinic visit. This should be worn at all times. Try to keep your bandages clean and dry.
- When sitting or lying, you should use pillows to support your surgically affected extremity, especially when sleeping.

**Referral to Therapy:**

- You will be instructed to make an appointment with physical therapy (PT) at either 2 weeks or 6 weeks following your surgery. Dr. Bakker will notify you at your initial post-operative visit when PT will be started. Depending on the clinic where physical therapy will be performed, please contact our Edina office at 952-456-7000 or our Plymouth office at 763-302-2313, to schedule.

**-Surgery to Week 1:**

- Remain in post-operative dressing and UltraSling.
- Perform gentle range of motion activities of the elbow, wrist, and fingers. Motion of the shoulder should be avoided at this time.
- Ice 20-30 minutes three times daily.
- Transition to Tylenol and ibuprofen.

**-Weeks 1-2:**

- Discontinuation of narcotics is expected, continue with Tylenol and ibuprofen as needed.
- Wear the sling at all times.
- You may allow the elbow to straighten with gravity. You will use your uninvolved hand to support and bend your injured elbow. You may bend to the end point of motion.
- You will use your uninvolved hand to rotate your injured forearm (palm up / palm down) with your elbow bent. Gentle stretch may be applied at end ranges of motion.
- Return to the clinic at the end of week two for evaluation and suture removal.
- You may get your surgical area wet after sutures are removed, but it is best to avoid submerging your incision for 1-2 days.

**-Weeks 2-6:**

- Initiate physical therapy at either 2 or 6 weeks post-operatively, depending on instructions from Dr. Bakker. This will involve ROM of the shoulder in forward flexion as tolerated, external rotation to 15 degrees, and Codman's. Continue with elbow, wrist, and finger motion.
- No strengthening at this point.
- No use of the injured arm to grasp, pull/push or lift.

**-Weeks 6-12:**

- Return to the clinic at 6 weeks post-operatively for reevaluation.
- Discontinue the use of the UltraSling. You may consider wearing the sling portion without the abduction pillow for a couple of weeks when outside of the home.
- Continue physical therapy with the goals of improving motion. You may begin with 1 pound and pain free range of motion.
- Transition to driving, stationary biking, and running as tolerated.

**-Weeks 12 and beyond:**

- Follow up at week 12 for re-evaluation or as needed if there is a concern.
- Progress strengthening at physical therapy, including the use of TheraBands. Continue with active and passive range of motion.
- Return to recreational and work activities as tolerated.

**-6 months:**

- Expect full activity, though maximum results can be expected at 1 year post-operatively.