Arthroscopic Rotator Cuff Repair Protocol (Medium Tear)

William Schneider, MD

STAGE I: (0-4 WEEKS POST-OP)

- Patient wears sling continuously for 4 weeks. Sling may be off for exercises, showering, dressing. OK to do tabletop activities within pain tol, keeping elbow at side (ie: eat, brush teeth, write, occ keying). **Patient should NOT actively lift arm away from side.**
- **Exercises:**
  - PROM only to limits determined in OR. If no limits on Rx, assume patient is able to do full ROM
  1. First 4 weeks: Pendulum and tabletop PROM
  2. Scapular retraction
  3. Ice following treatment and HEP
  4. If **subscap** repair: ER to neutral until 6 weeks post op
  5. **Goal:** Full PROM to symmetric ROM or to limits established by surgeon
  6. **Precautions:** Protect supraspinatus repair or any other involved tendon repair
  7. Visits: 6-8 visits over 4 weeks

STAGE II: (4-8 WEEKS POST-OP)

- **4 Weeks** post op:
  1. AAROM: Flex, Abd, Ext, IR, and ER
  2. Home pulley use if needed
- **6 Weeks** post op:
  1. Begin AROM, no weight, pain free arc only
     - Active rotator cuff exercises without weight
     - Active elevation exercises: (ie: walk climb, flex, abd, etc)
  2. Scap stab exercises: scap depression, extension, horiz abd
  3. Proprioception exercises on the counter top and/or closed-chain axial loading with ball on the wall
  4. **Precautions:** Do not increase inflammation
  5. Visits: 1-2 times per week depending on ROM
STAGE III: (8-12 WEEKS POST-OP)

- Begin strengthening/progressive AROM for all ex as listed. Use 2 oz to 1 lb. weights. Minimal pain with ex or later in day. **Emphasize high reps for endurance.**
  1. Standing flexion to shoulder level or modified in supine
  2. Standing scaption with thumbs up to shoulder level
  3. Sidelying ER with towel roll under arm
  4. Prone ER keeping elbow bent to 90
  5. Standing IR with theraband
  6. Bicep curl palm up
- Add progressive standing wall push up ex and proprioception ex on the wall with small ball and body blade and/or fitter
- Progress scap stab training
- **Goal:** Full AROM by week 12
- **Precaution:** Do not increase inflammation or overwork the cuff. NSAIDS may be appropriate if patient has no precautions for taking them
- Progress weight with ex per tol
- Emphasis on HEP
- Visits: 6-8 max over these 4 weeks

STAGE IV: (3-4 MONTHS POST-OP)

- Progress rotator cuff ex with 3 lb. limit. Emphasis on HEP
- Add proprioception ex on hands and knees with wobble board
- **Goals:** RTW and sports without limits 4-6 months post op
  - Full AROM to pre-set limits
- **HEP:** 7 days/week for stretching/ice
  - 4 days/week for strengthening
- **Visits:** 1x every 2 weeks only if patient having difficulty