

**Michael S. Bogard, DO**  
**ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON**  
Sports Medicine Specialist

Postoperative Rehabilitation Guidelines/Protocols  
**Large/Massive Rotator Cuff Repair**

**1-6 Weeks:**

- Sling Immobilization
- Active ROM exercises to the Elbow, Wrist and Hand
- True Passive (ONLY) ROM Shoulder. NO ACTIVE MOTION.
  - Pendulums
  - Supine Elevation in Scapular plane = 140 degrees
  - External Rotation to tolerance with arm at side (emphasize ER, minimum goal 40°)
- Scapular Stabilization exercises (side lying)
- Deltoid isometrics in neutral (submaximal) as ROM improves
- No Pulley/Canes until 6 weeks post-op (these are active motions)

**6-12 Weeks:**

- Discontinue sling
- Begin Active Assist ROM and advance to Active as Tolerated
  - Elevation in scapular plane and external rotation to tolerance
  - No Internal rotation or behind back until 6 weeks post-op, after may begin to tolerance
  - Light stretching at end ranges
- Cuff Isometrics with arm at the side
- Upper Body Ergometer

**3-12 Months:**

- Advance to full ROM as tolerated with passive stretching at end ranges
- Advance strengthening as tolerated: isometrics □ bands □ light weights (1-5 lbs); 8-12 reps/2-3 sets per rotator cuff, deltoid, and scapular stabilizers
- Only do strengthening 3x/week to avoid rotator cuff tendonitis
- Begin eccentrically resisted motions, plyometrics (ex. Weighted ball toss), proprioception (es. body blade)
- Begin sports related rehab at 4 1/2 months, including advanced conditioning
- If throwing athlete
  - Return to throwing at 6 months
  - Throw from pitcher's mound at 9 months
- Collision sports at 9 months
- Maximal medical improvement usually at 12 months post-op