

**SHOULDER POSTERIOR STABILIZATION**  
Post-Operative Protocol

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**Phase I- Maximum Protection**

**Weeks 0 to 2:**

- Wear Ultrasling at all times
- No GHJ range of motion for 2 weeks

Goals

- Reduce pain and inflammation
- Postural education

Exercise progression

- No GHJ ROM x 2 weeks
- Cervical ROM and basic deep neck flexor activation (chin tucks)
- Hand and wrist AROM
- Elbow AROM
- Active shoulder retraction
- Encourage walks and low intensity cardiovascular exercise to promote healing

**Phase II- Passive/Active Assisted Range of Motion**

**Weeks 2 to 4:**

- Wear Ultrasling at all times
- Initiate PROM and AAROM at shoulder
- Initiate submaximal isometrics directed by therapist

Goals

- Postural education with cervical spine and neutral scapular positioning
- Shoulder flexion to 90 degrees by week 4
- Shoulder scaption to 90 degrees by week 4
- Shoulder external rotation progress as tolerated

Manual therapy

- Graded glenohumeral and scapulothoracic mobilizations
- Scar tissue mobilization when incisions are healed
- STM to shoulder and cervicothoracic complex
- Gentle sub-maximal therapist directed isometrics to achieve range of motion goals
- Limit aggressive posterior glenohumeral mobilizations

Exercise progression

- Supine and upright AAROM using cane, T-bar, pulleys, etc.
- DNF and proper postural positioning with shoulder retraction
- Low to moderate intensity cardiovascular work

**Phase III- Active Range of Motion**

**Weeks 4 to 6:**

- Discontinue sling at 4 weeks
- Continue PROM and AAROM at shoulder
- Initiate AROM at shoulder

Goals

- Shoulder flexion progress to full
- Shoulder scaption progress to full
- Shoulder internal rotation to 30 degrees at neutral and 90 degrees abduction

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### Manual therapy

- Graded glenohumeral and scapulothoracic mobilizations
- Scar tissue mobilization when incisions are healed
- STM to shoulder and cervicothoracic complex
- Gentle contract-relax and hold-relax to gain range of motion while respecting repaired tissue
- Manual perturbations in supine with arm at 90 degrees flexion and ER/IR at neutral
- Limit aggressive posterior glenohumeral mobilizations

### Exercise progression

- Open chain serratus activation
- Prone scapular series less than 90 degrees (rows and I's)
- External rotation against gravity (no resistance)
- Pain-free sub-max 6 direction rotator cuff isometrics
- Low to moderate intensity cardiovascular work

## **Phase IV- Progressing Range of Motion and Strengthening**

### **Weeks 6 to 12:**

- Progress to full PROM and AROM
- Initiate internal rotation behind back
- Normalize glenohumeral and scapulothoracic arthrokinematics
- Initiate strengthening phase with resistance

### Goals

- Full PROM by week 10
- Full AROM by week 12

### Manual therapy

- PROM and mobilizations to achieve full flexion and internal rotation
- Manual perturbations
- PNF patterns
- Rhythmic stabilization and perturbations in quadruped for scapular and core strengthening-bilateral progressing to unilateral/tripod position

### Exercise progression

- Initiate UE bike
- Initiate biceps strengthening at 6 weeks
- Progress serratus punches and prone series by adding resistance as tolerated
- Initiate resisted rotator cuff strengthening
- Progress PNF patterns to standing with protected end range of 90/90
- Initiate closed kinetic chain progression with ½ to ¾ range of motion protecting anterior shoulder capsule
- Initiate sleeper stretch and functional IR reach stretching at 6 weeks
- Able to progress to elliptical for cardiovascular health at 6 weeks
- Able to progress to running at 8 to 12 weeks per tolerance

## **Phase V- Advanced Strengthening and Plyometric Drills**

### **Weeks 12 to 24:**

- Full ROM with protection at end range 90/90
- Follow up examination with physician at 6 months for release to full activity
- Initiate plyometric drills

### Goals

- Full range of motion with protection at end range 90/90
- Advance gym strengthening program
- Initiate sport specific exercises at 12 weeks

- Initiate interval throwing program for athletes at 18-20 weeks

### Manual therapy

- STM and joint mobilization to glenohumeral, scapulothoracic and cervicothoracic as needed
- Manual perturbations
- PNF patterns

### Exercise progression

- Full ROM in all planes with protected end range 90/90
- Progress rotator cuff and scapular strengthening program
- Advance gym strengthening program maintaining anterior shoulder precautions with pressing and chest fly exercises
- Initiate plyometric and rebounder drills

### Criteria for return to play:

- Full, pain-free range of motion
- Normal glenohumeral and scapulothoracic arthrokinematics
- >90% MMT using handheld dynamometer
- Full progression through interval program

### Anticipated return to sports:

- 6 months for contact athlete
- 9 months for throwing athlete, swimmer, or volleyball player

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