

## **POST-OP Open Rotator Cuff Repair Instructions and Therapy Protocol**

Dr. Erik J Carlson  
Active Orthopaedics P.C.  
Middlebury, CT

Office Contact Number: 203-758-1272

### **Instructions**

- ✓ Use the supplied sling at all times unless performing therapy exercises as directed. Usually you will need the sling at all times for 6 weeks.
- ✓ Use your **R L** hand for light activities only that can be performed while in a sling .
- ✓ For bathing, after removal of the dressing, you may shower. **DO NOT** use the **R L** arm for washing. Be gentle. Sudden movements or actively moving the arm away from the body can disrupt the surgical repair.

### **Dressing**

- ✓ Keep your dressing intact until the follow-up appointment. If you have a clear dressing over the incision, it is designed for you to be able to shower lightly over it. If it becomes wet underneath the dressing or the dressing begins to peel off, please call the office.

*To reduce the risk of infection:*

- **DO NOT soak the wounds for prolonged periods (ie no swimming, baths, etc).**
- **DO NOT apply any antibiotic or other ointments, gels, or creams**
- **Call the office if there is persistent drainage from the surgical wounds after removal of the dressing.**

### **Medications**

- ✓ Please take the prescribed medication as directed. Do not drive while taking narcotic pain medication.

### **Follow-Up**

- ✓ Please make an appointment to see me back in the office approximately 14 days from surgery. The sutures will be removed at that time.

Please call the office number above with any questions or concerns following surgery.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION IN THE POST-OP PERIOD**

## Rotator Cuff Repair Post-Op Therapy Instructions

Dr. Erik J Carlson  
Active Orthopaedics  
Middlebury, CT

Office Contact Number: 203-758-1272

Patient Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Surgery \_\_\_\_\_

Diagnosis \_\_\_\_\_ Type of Repair \_\_\_\_\_

### **Week 0-1: Goals = Control pain, promote healing, prevent stiffness**

Wean off of prescribed medication. Avoid NSAIDs.

#### **Exercises to perform 4-5 x day, 7 days/week**

Pendulums (start on first day of therapy)  
Elbow, wrist, hand ROM

*Stay in sling when not performing exercises*

### **Week 1-6: Goals = Promote healing, prevent stiffness**

Begin **PROM**. NO ACTIVE OR ACTIVE-ASSISTED ROM UNTIL AFTER 6 WEEKS  
NO LIFTING, NO SUDDEN MOVEMENTS, AVOID IR  
PROM: Goals of 140 FF/ 40 ER at side, ABD 60-80 *without* rotation. Progress  
GENTLY!

**\*ER is restricted to 0 if subscapularis repair is performed**

#### **Exercises to perform 4-5 x day, 7 days/week**

Pendulums, Shoulder shrugs  
Supine passive arm elevation, table slides.  
Supine passive external rotation  
Scapular retraction

*Stay in sling when not performing exercises*

### **Week 6-12: Goals = Begin active motion, Improve ROM, Strengthen gently**

Wean off of the use of the sling  
Begin **AAROM** → **AROM**. Goals for ROM above, gently increase as tolerated  
Begin gentle isometric strengthening with arm at side at 8 weeks post-op.

### **Months 3-12: Goals = Regain full motion, Strengthen muscles, Return to sports**

Full ROM as tolerated  
Strengthening: isometrics → bands → light weights  
Sports-related rehab at 4.5 months  
Expect return to sports no earlier than 6 months.  
Throwing → 6 months  
Pitching → 9 months  
Collision sports → 9 months