

Protocol S2
Physical Therapy Protocol for
Arthroscopic Capsulotomy and Debridement

Phase I: Motion Phase (0-4 weeks)

GOALS:

- Minimize pain and inflammation.
- Achieve full passive and active range of motion (ROM) of the operated shoulder.

ANCILLARY MEASURES:

- Wear shoulder sling for comfort (3-7 days), then discontinue.
- Use pain medications as needed.
- Ice the shoulder (cold pack) as needed.

EXERCISES:

- **Codman's Pendulum:** Stand adjacent to a chair or table and bend slightly at the waist. Support your body weight by leaning on the chair or table with the opposite arm. Let the full weight of the operated arm hang freely. Gently swing the operated arm forward and back, side to side for 15 seconds. Progress to 3-5 minutes, repeat 8-10 times each day.
- **Passive Forward Flexion:** Use a therapy helper or your opposite arm to gently raise arm up in front. Start with arm at your side and passively bring hand to your mouth, forehead and to the top of your head. Repeat 8-10 times per day, 10-15 repetitions. Passive shoulder abduction is also permitted.
- **Active and Passive External Rotation:** With arm at side and elbow flexed 90 degrees, rotate your forearm, bringing hand straight out in front (as though accepting change from a cashier). Gradually increase active external rotation, bringing hand away from body, as tolerated. Repeat 8-10 times per day, 10-15 repetitions.
- **Active Range of Motion:** Begin progressive active forward flexion and abduction. Progress to include all planes of motion. Repeat 8-10 times per day, 10-15 repetitions.
- **Wall Climb:** Face a wall with hands out in front of body, touching the wall. Use fingers to climb the wall, slowly raising the arms. At the peak, hold for 15-30 seconds, 5 repetitions.
- **Posterior Shoulder Capsule Stretch:** Bring affected arm across body to feel the stretch in the posterior shoulder (back side). Hold for 15-30 seconds, 5 repetitions.
- **Supine Overhead Stretching:** Begin in a supine position (lying flat on bed). Grip a stick with both hands. Raise the stick slowly overhead. Hold for 5 seconds, 5 repetitions.
- **Overhead Pulley:** Secure overhead pulley in doorway. Grasp both handles. Pull down on the unoperated side while the operated shoulder is relaxed (passive motion). Progress to active motion of the operated shoulder. Repeat 8-10 times per day, 10-15 repetitions.
- **Isometrics:** Shoulder flexion, extension, abduction, external rotation and internal rotation isometrics are encouraged.
- **Hand/Wrist ROM:** Active ROM of the elbow, wrist and fingers on the operated side is encouraged. Ball squeezes are allowed. Table top activities are allowed.

PRECAUTION:

- Do not let the shoulder become stiff. Work on shoulder ROM throughout the day.

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Phase II: Strengthening Phase (5-8 weeks)

GOALS:

- Maintain full active ROM of the operated shoulder.
- Improve shoulder strength.

ANCILLARY MEASURES:

- Sling should have been discontinued and is no longer used.
- Use pain medications as needed.
- Ice shoulder (cold pack) as needed.

EXERCISES:

- **Continue all Phase I exercises** described above. Add the following exercises which should be supervised by a physical therapist.
- **Isotonic Strengthening w/Therabands:** Secure the theraband to a doorknob or hook so that you may stretch the band until you feel resistance. Start using low resistive theraband, 5 repetitions, 3 times per day. Gradually increase repetitions to achieve 20 repetitions per exercise, 3 times per day. Then graduate to more resistive theraband and begin with 5 repetitions and repeat process, gradually increasing repetitions per exercise per day. Strengthening exercises should include shoulder flexion, extension, abduction, external rotation and internal rotation.
- **Isotonic Strengthening w/Free Weights:** Progress to light free weights (not more than three pounds) after therabands have been used.
- **Aggressive Stretching:** Self stretching may be helpful prior to strengthening exercises. Stretch in adduction (posterior capsule), external rotation and internal rotation (using towel or belt behind back) to maximize range of motion.

PRECAUTIONS:

- Do not let the shoulder become stiff.
- Work on shoulder ROM and stretching exercises throughout the day.
- Avoid heavy lifting and sports activity.

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Phase III: Full Activity Phase (9+ weeks)

GOALS:

- Maintain optimal function.
- Return to full daily activities.

ANCILLARY MEASURES:

- Use pain medications as needed.
- Ice shoulder (cold pack) as needed.

EXERCISES:

- **Continue all Phase I and Phase II exercises.**
- Continue maintenance exercise program of isotonic strengthening 3 times per week. The maintenance program may be done without the assistance of a physical therapist.
- Gradually resume usual lifting and sports activity.