



Orthopedic Surgery, Sports Medicine & Arthroscopy Specialists

Jonathan Watson, MD

REHABILITATION PROTOCOL- Nonoperative adhesive capsulitis

The rehabilitation guidelines are presented in a criterion based progression program. Individual patients will progress at different rates depending on their age, associated injuries, pre-injury health status, rehab compliance, tissue quality and injury severity. Specific time frames, restrictions, and precautions may also be given to protect healing tissues and the surgical repair/reconstruction. The therapist should consult the referring physician with any questions or concerns.

INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATIONS

PHASE 1 (~1-4 weeks)

REHAB GOALS	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Gradual restoration of ROM2. Minimize swelling & pain3. Instruction of exercises to perform at home in addition to PT
PRECAUTIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ice/modalities as needed for pain
RANGE OF MOTION EXERCISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Pendulum exercises○ Supine flexion/IR/ER using opposite arm, towel behind back for IR○ Active & passive elbow, wrist, hand ROM, ball squeeze, gripping○ Soft tissue mobilizations/techniques as tolerated○ CPM (if available) in plane of scapula for IR/ER
SUGGESTED THERAPEUTIC EXERCISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ As above○ UE- avoid heavy weight. Scapular retraction/elevation, biceps/triceps○ LE and core activities when pain tolerates○ Closed chain- pain free, below shoulder level○ Rhythmic stabilization for IR/ER in plane of scapula in modified neutral
CARDIOVASCULAR EXERCISE	Aqua therapy, stationary bike
PROGRESSION CRITERIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ No pain at rest○ Compliance with home exercises○ Controlled pain/inflammation

PHASE 2 (~5-8 weeks)

REHAB GOALS	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Improve ROM2. Minimize pain and swelling
PRECAUTIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ice/modalities as needed2. Avoid repetitive overhead activities

RANGE OF MOTION EXERCISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue phase 1 exercises ○ Glenohumeral/scapular mobilizations and soft tissue technique as needed ○ Active assist ROM with pulleys when flexion >130 ○ CPM if available
SUGGESTED THERAPEUTIC EXERCISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue phase 1 exercises ○ Periscapular muscle strengthening ○ Submax cuff isometrics in neutral ○ Full can scaption, dumbbell row, shoulder extension in prone, single arm cable column pulldown in scapular plane if no dyskinesia ○ Closed chain- below 90 deg elevation ○ Rhythmic stabilization supine IR/ER plane of scapula
CARDIOVASCULAR EXERCISE	Continue phase 1 Add elliptical, begin without UE UBE
PROGRESSION CRITERIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No rest/night pain ○ Home exercise compliance ○ Control of pain/inflammation

PHASE 3 (~9-16 weeks)

REHAB GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gradual restoration of ROM ○ Improve scapular, cuff strength ○ Minimize pain
PRECAUTIONS	
RANGE OF MOTION EXERCISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue exercises from phase 2. ○ Can begin gentle end range stretches ○ Pec & sleeper stretches
SUGGESTED THERAPEUTIC EXERCISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue exercises from phase 2. Progress weight/resistance ○ LE & core- progress strengthening. ○ UE- trap, lat strengthening ○ Closed chain- quadruped, physioball below 90 ○ PNF D2 flexion in supine ○ Wall slides in plane of scapula
CARDIOVASCULAR EXERCISE	Continue phase 2 Ok to start swimming
PROGRESSION CRITERIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No pain with ADLs/rest/night pain ○ Equal active & passive ROM ○ Normalize scapulohumeral kinematics

PHASE 4 (~17-22 weeks)

REHAB GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Full ROM in all planes ○ No pain ○ Improvement of strength, endurance, neuromuscular control
PRECAUTIONS	Post-activity soreness should resolve within 24 hours Avoid post activity swelling
RANGE OF MOTION EXERCISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue with flexibility exercises from previous phase ○ Gentle end range stretching ○ LE and core flexibility ○ Mobilizations as needed
SUGGESTED THERAPEUTIC EXERCISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue phase 3 activities. Progress with resistance/load. ○ Advance scapular strengthening to prone ○ PNF D2 standing ○ Wall pushup progression ○ Bodyblade modified neutral IR/ER ○ Plyometrics-week 20 ball toss, side to side toss
CARDIOVASCULAR EXERCISE	Continue from phase 3, add upper body ergometer if needed. Walk/jog progression
PROGRESSION CRITERIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No pain with ADLs or PT ○ Full active ROM ○ 80% strength of contralateral ○ Normal scapulohumeral rhythm

PHASE 5 (~23+ weeks)

REHAB GOALS	Return to sport/work
PRECAUTIONS	Post-activity soreness should resolve within 24 hours Recommend brace usage during initial return to sport, especially contact athletes
RANGE OF MOTION EXERCISES	Continue with flexibility exercises
SUGGESTED THERAPEUTIC EXERCISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Progress strengthening from phase 4 ○ Advance cuff strengthening to 90 deg abduction ○ Advance bodyblade, PNF, closed chain ○ Plyometrics: bilateral arm throwing patterns beginning with chest pass, progress to single arm. Overhead b/l medicine ball slams & catches. Rebounder IR/ER at 90 abduction, supine IR/ER ball catch & toss. Progress all to single arm.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ok to begin sport specific overhead work for swimming, tennis, volleyball○ Overhead athletes- Interval throwing program- Phase 1, progress to phase 2 when completed
CARDIOVASCULAR EXERCISE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Jog/run progression. Begin sprinting when able to run 2 miles without pain.○ Rowing machine, Nordic trak
PROGRESSION CRITERIA- RETURN TO SPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Pain free, full ROM, uncompensated under fast & resisted conditions○ 90% strength of contralateral side rotator cuff & scapular (at least 70% rotator cuff ratio).○ Completion of throwing program/sport specific program○ At least 90% functional closed kinetic chain tests○ Overhead athletes with normal mechanics/form and no pain post activity