Jennifer Thomson, MD
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY | SPORTS MEDICINE

Rehabilitation Protocol: Proximal Humerus ORIF

Phase I: 0-2 weeks

- Brace: Shoulder immobilizer at all times except during exercise & hygiene
- ROM:
> active/passive elbow/wrist/hand ROM
> Weeks 0-2: No ROM except gentle passive home exercises
> Weeks 2-4: True passive (ONLY) ROM of shoulder. NO ACTIVE MOTION.
- Weightbearing: Non-weightbearing
- Exercises:

Weeks 0-2:
- Pendulums
- Grip strengthening

Weeks 2-4:
- Pendulums
- Codman's
- Avoid stretch of anterior capsule and extension
- Supine elevation in scapular plane to max 140 degrees
- No abduction past 90 deg
- ER to 40 deg with arm at side
- Scapular stabilization exercises (side-lying)
- Deltoid isometrics in neutral (submaximal) as ROM improves
- No pulley/canes until 6 wks post-op (these include active motions)

Phase II: 4-6 weeks

More extensive fracture patterns may be 6 weeks in sling/immobilizer

- Brace: Discontinue shoulder immobilizer
- ROM:
> Continue elbow/wrist/hand ROM
> Begin active assist shoulder ROM
- Weightbearing: <5 lbs
- Exercises:
- Elevation in scapular plane and external rotation as tolerated
- No internal rotation or behind back until 6 wks

Phase III: 6-12 weeks

- Brace: None
- ROM:
> Active assist to active ROM of shoulder as tolerated
> Elevation in scapular plane and external rotation to tolerance
> Begin internal rotation as tolerated
- Weightbearing: <5 lbs
- Exercises:
- Light stretching at end ranges
- Begin active assisted exercises
- Begin deltoid and cuff isometrics at 6 wks with arm at the side in neutral
- Light upper body ergometer

Phone: 201-639-6620

JT
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Phase IV: 12-16 weeks

- Brace: None
- ROM: advance to full ROM as tolerated with passive stretching at end ranges
- Weightbearing: advance as tolerated
- Exercises:
  - Emphasize external rotation and latissimus eccentrics
  - Glenohumeral stabilization
  - Upper body ergometer
  - Light endurance strengthening
  - Cycling/running as tolerated at 12 wks
  - Advance strengthening as tolerated: isometrics -> bands -> light weights (1-5 lbs); 8-12 reps/3 sets per rotator cuff, deltoid, scapular stabilizers
  - Only do strengthening 3x/wk to avoid rotator cuff tendonitis

Phase V: 4-12 months

- Brace: None
- ROM: full
- Weightbearing: advance as tolerated
- Exercises:
  - Begin eccentrically resisted motions, scapular perturbation, plyometrics (eg, weighted ball toss), proprioception (eg, body blade)
  - Begin sports-related rehab at 4.5 months, including advanced conditioning
  - Return to throwing at 6 months
  - Throw from pitcher's mound at 9 months
  - Collision sports at 9 months
  - MMI is usually at 12 months post-op

Return to sport as guided by surgeon

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