

AC Joint Reconstruction Protocol

Precautions:

DO NOT let weight of arm pull on shoulder for the first 6 weeks following surgery
NO PENDULUM EXERCISES for the first 6 weeks after surgery
DO NOT elevate surgical arm above 90 degrees in any plane for the first 6 weeks after surgery
DO NOT lift any objects over 3 pounds with the surgical arm for the first 6 weeks after surgery
Avoid excessive reaching as well as internal rotation and external rotation for the first 6 weeks after surgery

Recommendations:

Ice the shoulder 3-5 times per day for 10-20 minutes to control swelling and inflammation
Wear sling at all times when standing or sleeping for the first 6 weeks after surgery
Keep incision clean and dry for the first 2 weeks after surgery

Days 1 – 14

Sling
Elbow/hand gripping and ROM exercises
 Perform 4-6 times per day
Begin gentle passive shoulder internal and external rotation exercises
Cryotherapy for pain and inflammation
 Ice for 15-20 minutes approximately 4-6 times daily
Sleeping
 Sleep in sling

Weeks 2-4

Sling except when doing exercises with physical therapy
Begin gentle passive and active-assisted shoulder ROM
 Do not exceed 90 degrees of forward flexion or abduction
 No active ROM
 No lifting or strengthening activities
Sleeping
 Sleep in sling

Weeks 4-6

Sling except when doing exercises with physical therapy
PT: Increase ROM
 Do not exceed 90 degrees of forward flexion or abduction
 No active ROM
 No lifting or strengthening activities
Sleeping
 Sleep in sling

Weeks 6-12

May discontinue use of sling
PT: Attempt to achieve full ROM in all planes
 May begin active ROM
 No lifting or strengthening activities

Weeks 12-18

PT: Continue to seek full ROM in all planes

May begin isometric strengthening activities

Weeks 18-24

PT: Continue to seek full ROM in all planes

May begin progressive resistance exercises with weights as tolerated

**** Goal is to return to sporting activities at 6 months.**