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Post-Operative Rehabilitation Guidelines for Massive Rotator Cuff Tears

- 1-6 Weeks:** Sling Immobilization
Active ROM Elbow, Wrist and Hand
True Passive (ONLY) ROM Shoulder
Pendulums,
Supine Elevation in Scapular plane = 140 degrees
External Rotation = 40 degrees
Scapular Stabilization exercises (sidelying)
Deltoid isometrics in neutral (submaximal) as ROM improves
No Pulley/Canes until 6 weeks post-op
If biceps tenodesis performed, no resisted elbow flexion until 8 weeks
- 6-12 Weeks:** Discontinue Sling
Active Assist to Active ROM Shoulder As Tolerated
Elevation in scapular plane and external rotation to tolerance
Begin internal rotation as tolerated
Light stretching at end ranges
Cuff Isometrics with the arm at the side
Upper Body Ergometer
If biceps tenodesis performed, no resisted elbow flexion until 8 weeks
- 3-12 Months** Advance to full ROM as tolerated with passive stretching at end ranges
Advance strengthening as tolerated: isometrics → bands → light weights (1-5 lbs); 8-12 reps/2-3 sets per rotator cuff, deltoid, and scapular stabilizers
Only do strengthening 3x/week to avoid rotator cuff tendonitis
Begin eccentrically resisted motions, plyometrics (ex. Weighted ball toss), proprioception (es. body blade)
Begin sports related rehab at 4 ½ 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