



# PT Protocol

## Reverse Total Shoulder Arthroplasty

Michael J Rytel, MD  
Greater Pittsburgh Orthopaedic Associates

### Phase 1: 0-6 Weeks

#### Goals

Protect the subscapularis, ADL strategies and sling management, gentle ROM emphasized, Outpatient PT to begin 2-4 weeks post op for most

#### Sling

0-3 Weeks: Essentially full time with abduction “pillow”

3-6 Weeks: May discontinue “pillow” and use sling as needed

#### Range of Motion

Avoid stretching of any kind for 6 weeks

Pendulum/Codman exercises begin day 1

0-2 Weeks: PROM: Scaption 75 degrees, ER 20 degrees, IR as tolerated

3-6 Weeks: PROM: Scaption 120 degrees, ER 30 degrees, IR as tolerated

#### Strength

0-2 Weeks: Begin squeeze ball, elbow, wrist and hand active movement day 1

2-4 Weeks: Scapular retractions, shrugs

Walking (in sling)

4-6 Weeks: Active IR, ER standing with arm at side

Wand exercises (beginning supine), Wall walks

Prone shoulder extension to neutral

Stationary bike (in sling)

#### Functional Measure

ASES Score greater than 30



## Phase 2: 6-12 Weeks

### Goals

Continue to respect subscapularis repair, initiate active movement, discontinue sling, education to outline realistic expectations, promote scapular mechanics

### Range of Motion

Expect gradual progress through this phase  
No aggressive stretching, but may do gentle stretching and shoulder mobilization

### Strength

6-8 Weeks: Scapular retraining, retraction, protraction (supine), shrugs

- Band exercises with arm at side or side lying

- Sub maximal isometrics

- Wand exercises upright when mechanics are good supine

- Blood Flow Restriction training (BFR)

8-12 Weeks: Scapular retraining progressing add I's, T's and Y's

- IR and ER band exercises continue

- Wall push ups to press plus position, biceps, triceps, wrist strength

- Add core work, lower extremity strengthening

### Conditioning

Increase bike but avoid weight bearing with surgical arm

Balance starting with single leg. Later may add perturbation

### Functional Measure

ASES score greater than 50



## Phase 3: 3-6 Months

### Goals

Ultimately patient should be able to wash their hair, reach under opposite arm, reach behind back for hygiene. Focus on posture and good scapular mechanics

### Range of Motion

Target 150 degrees of elevation/scaption, stretching, shoulder mobilization

### Strength

12-16 Weeks: Continue I's, T's and Y's,  
Biceps, triceps, forearm and wrist strengthening continues  
Add rows, scapular punches,  
BFR

16-24 Weeks: Continue all previous  
Add dumbbell chest press  
"Blade" exercises

### Conditioning

Focus on total body conditioning especially core, balance and aerobic fitness  
Add perturbation when ready  
Supine two handed medicine ball toss and catch

### Functional Measure

ASES score greater than 70



## **Phase 4: After 6 Months - Return to Modified Activity**

### **Goals**

Understanding that there will always be some limitations, emphasize importance of continuing program at home, education that improvement will be seen even at 12 months. Heavy lifting or impact activities should be avoided completely

### **Strength**

Kneeling push ups emphasizing form if conditioning allows  
Strengthening in gym, but AVOID: pull downs, overhead press, dips, pull ups  
Continue to work on scapular mechanics

### **Conditioning, Plyometrics and Agility**

Continue to work balance with perturbation  
Increase endurance, core strength

### **Functional Measure**

ASES score greater than 80