

Rotator Cuff Repair

Rotator Cuff Repair surgery is performed for:

Painful and symptomatic rotator cuff tears.

Rehabilitation Protocol

This protocol is based on maintaining range of movement in the first phase and then gradually building strength in the middle to the last phase.

Some of the physiotherapy terms may be unfamiliar to you now. They will become clear as you work with your physiotherapist.

Milestones

Time after surgery	What you can expect from your shoulder
Week 4	>50% pre operative passive range of motion
Week 6	Active assisted range of motion equal to pre operative level
Week 12	Active range of motion equal to pre operative level

Return to functional activities

Activity	When you can expect to be able to do the activity
Return to work	Sedentary job: 3 weeks Manual job: Guided by surgeon- may be between 3-6months
Driving	6 weeks
Swimming	Breaststroke: 6 weeks Freestyle: 3 months
Lifting	Avoid lifting heavy items for 3 months, after then, as guided by your strength
Golf	3 months
Contact/High Impact Sports	3 months e.g. Rugby League, AFL, Martial Arts, Racket Sports, Surfing

Before Surgery

Pre-operative rehabilitation is advisable. This involves:

- range of motion exercises
- maximising strength of deltoid, intact cuff muscles and scapula stabilisers

After surgery

Time after surgery	Physiotherapy/Support
Day 1 to 3 weeks	<p>During the first three weeks you can expect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be fitted with a polysling and body belt (while in theatre) <p>Be taught to perform the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wrist, hand, and finger exercises • elbow flexion/extension and rotation • scapula setting exercises • pendular exercises • passive ROM in all directions as tolerated
3 to 6 weeks	<p>During the next 3 weeks, you can expect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wean off the sling at 6 weeks • perform gentle isometric exercises in neutral (as pain allows) • begin active assisted exercises ensuring glenohumeral movement, not scapulothoracic <p><i>Do not force or stretch or stretch your shoulder</i></p>
6 to 12 weeks	<p>During the next 6 weeks, your physiotherapist will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • progress to full active exercises in all ranges • begin rotator cuff strengthening (pain free) • closed chain exercise • begin stretching the capsule • begin proprioceptive exercises