

Occupational Therapy Toolkit

Rotator Cuff Tendinitis, Tears and Repair

Functional Limitations:

ADL, IADL, work and leisure impairment

Weakness of the RTC muscles

Pain with activities above shoulder level and with external and internal rotation

Pain when arm is lowered from a fully raised position

Limited active ROM but not passive ROM unless there is adhesive capsulitis

Occupational Therapy Intervention:

ADL, IADL, work and leisure training using adaptive equipment to prevent pain and compensate for limited active ROM and weakness (fastening a bra in the back, putting on a belt, reaching for a wallet in the back pocket, reaching for a seatbelt, combing the hair, lifting weighted objects)

Instruct in pain management techniques

- Teach stress management and relaxation techniques

- Coordinate medication peak with exercise and activity

- Educate in use of superficial heat and cold

Conservative Management

Acute Phase

- Provide modalities (ultrasound, heat before stretching and cold pack after stretching) to decrease pain and inflammation

- Provide gentle shoulder stretching activities and exercise to increase ROM

- Instruct patient to sleep with a pillow between the trunk and arm

When Pain Free

- Provide progressive gentle shoulder strengthening activities and exercises to increase ROM and strength

Surgical Management

- Immobilization for 6 weeks in an abduction pillow, low-profile pillow sling, or a shoulder immobilizer

- At 1 week - passive ROM and pendulum exercises

- At 3 weeks - Assisted exercises in flexion and external rotation

- At 6 weeks - Isometric exercises of external rotation

- At 12 weeks - Active motion

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Patient Education:

1. Superficial Heat
2. Superficial Cold
3. Home Exercise Program Face Sheet
4. Shoulder Stretching Exercises
5. Shoulder ROM Dowel Exercises
6. Scapular Strengthening
7. Rotator Cuff Strengthening Exercises with Weights
8. Shoulder Isometric Exercises
9. Pendulum Exercises
10. Shoulder Active-Assisted Exercises
11. Stress Management and Relaxation Techniques