

**Orthopedic Associates of Hartford, P.C.**  
**J. Kristopher Ware, M.D/ Nicole Lavette, APRN**  
31 Seymour St #100      Date of Surgery:  
Hartford, CT 06106  
Phone: 860-244-1017, Fax: 860-524-8965  
[www.oahct.com](http://www.oahct.com)

---

**Post-Operative Rehabilitation Protocol:**

**Repair of Medium Size Rotator Cuff Tear**

**PHASE I: PROTECTIVE PHASE (WEEKS 0-6)**

GOALS: Allow soft tissue healing, diminish pain/inflammation, establish motion, retard muscle atrophy.

**I. Immediate Post-Operative to Week 3:**

A. General:

- \* Sling with abduction pillow
- \* Cryotherapy unit or ice 20 minutes/hour

B. Weight Bearing:

- \* Non-weight bearing

C. Range of Motion Goals:

- \* Passive
  - o Forward flexion 0°-70°
  - o Abduction 0°-70°
  - o ER in plane of scapula 0°-30°
  - o IR in plane of scapula 0°-30°
- \* ***NO combined forward elevation and internal rotation***

D. Treatment / Exercises:

- \* Active elbow and wrist range of motion, hand gripping
- \* Cervical AROM
- \* Table slides: Forward flexion - 0°-70°; Abduction - 0°-70°
- \* Shoulder shrugs, protraction, retraction
- \* Pendulums

**II. Weeks 3-6:**

A. General:

- \* Sling with abduction pillow
- \* Discontinue sling at after 4-5 weeks
- \* Cryotherapy unit or ice 20 minutes/hour

B. Weight Bearing:

- \* Non-weight bearing

**Orthopedic Associates of Hartford, P.C.**  
**J. Kristopher Ware, M.D/ Nicole Lavette, APRN**  
31 Seymour St #100      Date of Surgery:  
Hartford, CT 06106  
Phone: 860-244-1017, Fax: 860-524-8965  
[www.oahct.com](http://www.oahct.com)

---

**Post-Operative Rehabilitation Protocol:**

**Repair of Medium Size Rotator Cuff Tear**

C. Range of Motion Goals:

- \* Passive, AAROM
  - o Forward flexion 0°-120°
  - o Abduction 0°-120°
  - o ER in plane of scapula 0°-40°
  - o IR in plane of scapula 0°-30°
- \* ***NO*** combined forward elevation and internal rotation

D. Treatment / Exercises:

- \* Continue above treatment
- \* Pendulum exercises
- \* Wall climbs or L-bar for AAROM
- \* Rope and pulley for flexion only
- \* Isometrics (submaximal, pain-free) – abductors, ER, IR, shoulder/elbow flexors
- \* Humeral head stabilization exercises

**PHASE II – INTERMEDIATE PHASE (WEEKS 6-14)**

GOALS: Progress to full motion, decrease pain, increase functional activities.

Enter Phase II if:

- ✓ ROM goals above are met
- ✓ Minimal pain/tenderness

**III. Weeks 6-10:**

A. General:

- \* Cryotherapy unit or ice 20 minutes/hour as needed

B. Weight Bearing:

- \* Weight of arm

C. Range of Motion Goals:

- \* PROM, AAROM
  - o Forward flexion 0°-160°
  - o Abduction 0°-160°
  - o ER in plane of scapula 0°-45°
  - o IR in plane of scapula 0°-45°
  - o ER/IR at 90° abduction to tolerance
- \* ***NO*** combined forward elevation and internal rotation

D. Treatment / Exercises:

- \* Continue above treatment
- \* Exercise tubing ER/IR with arm at side
- \* Active shoulder extension lying prone or standing (forward flexed at waist). Avoid extension of shoulder beyond plane of the body

**Orthopedic Associates of Hartford, P.C.**  
**J. Kristopher Ware, M.D/ Nicole Lavette, APRN**  
31 Seymour St #100      Date of Surgery:  
Hartford, CT 06106  
Phone: 860-244-1017, Fax: 860-524-8965  
[www.oahct.com](http://www.oahct.com)

---

**Post-Operative Rehabilitation Protocol:**

**Repair of Medium Size Rotator Cuff Tear**

- \* Isotonic dumbbell exercises: deltoid, elbow flexors, periscapular muscles

#### **IV. Weeks 10-14:**

##### **A. General:**

- \* Cryotherapy unit or ice 20 minutes/hour as needed

##### **B. Weight Bearing:**

- \* Weight of arm

##### **C. Range of Motion Goals:**

- \* Progress to full PROM, AAROM, AROM as tolerated
- \* Goal of full ROM by Week 10-12

##### **D. Treatment / Exercises:**

- \* Continue above treatment
- \* Initiate isokinetic strengthening (scapular plane)
- \* Side-lying ER/IR exercises
- \* Initiate neuromuscular periscapular control exercises
- \* Tubing and Theraband exercises. Progress to free weights as strength improves.
- \* Standing tubing rowing
- \* Horizontal abduction (prone lying or bent waist position) to plane of body

#### **PHASE III – DYNAMIC STRENGTHENING PHASE (WEEKS 14-24)**

GOALS: Maintain motion, improve strength and neuromuscular control.

Enter Phase III if:

- ✓ Full, painless ROM
- ✓ No pain/tenderness
- ✓ Satisfactory arm control without scapular substitution

#### **V. Weeks 14-20:**

A., B., C. As above

##### **D. Treatment / Exercises:**

- \* Continue above treatment
- \* Capsular stretches
- \* Isotonic program – shoulder flexion, abduction, supraspinatus, ER/IR, elbow flexors/extensors, periscapular muscles
- \* Wall push ups. Emphasize protraction phase.
- \* Add total body conditioning program

**Orthopedic Associates of Hartford, P.C.**  
**J. Kristopher Ware, M.D/ Nicole Lavette, APRN**  
31 Seymour St #100      Date of Surgery:  
Hartford, CT 06106  
Phone: 860-244-1017, Fax: 860-524-8965  
[www.oahct.com](http://www.oahct.com)

---

**Post-Operative Rehabilitation Protocol:**

**Repair of Medium Size Rotator Cuff Tear**

## **VI. Months 5-6:**

A., B., C. As above

### **D. Treatment / Exercises:**

- \* Continue above treatment
- \* Progress to floor push up (hands and knees), then standard push up
- \* Military press, light weight initially. Keep arm anterior to chest
- \* Isokinetic strength and endurance training (high speeds – 120°-240° or greater per sec) for shoulder IR/ER (arm at side and elbow flexed 90° in plane of scapula)
  - \* Prerequisite strength requirements of the rotator cuff are 5-10 lbs for ER and 10-15 lbs for IR
- \* Ergometer exercise
- \* Initiate Interval Sport Program

## **PHASE IV: RETURN TO ACTIVITY PHASE (Months 6+)**

GOALS: Gradual return to recreational or competitive activity.

Enter Phase IV if:

- ✓ Full, painless ROM
- ✓ No pain/tenderness
- ✓ Satisfactory isokinetic test (Flex/Ex, Abd/Add)
- ✓ Satisfactory clinical exam

## **VII. Months 6+:**

A., B., C. As above

### **D. Treatment / Exercises:**

- \* Continue above treatment
- \* Resume normal training
- \* Isokinetic and endurance test to tolerance
- \* Continue basic ten programs for strengthening and flexibility
- \* Sport specific drills
- \* Return to competition if:
  - ✓ Full ROM
  - ✓ No pain/tenderness
  - ✓ Satisfactory strength (at least 95% of uninvolved arm)
  - ✓ Satisfactory clinical exam

**Orthopedic Associates of Hartford, P.C.**  
**J. Kristopher Ware, M.D/ Nicole Lavette, APRN**  
31 Seymour St #100      Date of Surgery:  
Hartford, CT 06106  
Phone: 860-244-1017, Fax: 860-524-8965  
[www.oahct.com](http://www.oahct.com)

---

**Post-Operative Rehabilitation Protocol:**

**Repair of Medium Size Rotator Cuff Tear**



**\* Addendum**

This protocol provides general rehabilitation guidelines following repair of a Medium Size Rotator Cuff Tear. It is subject to modification depending on the degree of injury, the type and extent of associated surgical intervention, as well as your individual progress post-operatively. For any questions, please call my office at 860-244-1017.