

Total Shoulder Arthroplasty (Anatomic)

Physical Therapy Protocol

Phase I – Immediate Post-Op (0–3 Weeks)

Goals:

- Protect surgical repair
- Reduce swelling and minimize pain
- Maintain elbow, wrist, and hand mobility
- Gradually increase shoulder PROM
- Minimize muscle inhibition
- Educate patient

Precautions / Restrictions:

- Sling in neutral rotation with abduction pillow (30–45°); worn at night
- No shoulder AROM
- No reaching behind back or internal rotation
- Avoid excessive ER or abduction
- No lifting or weight-bearing through arms
- Place pillow/towel under elbow when supine

Therapeutic Exercises:

- **PROM:**
 - ER $\leq 30^\circ$ (scapular plane)
 - IR to beltline
 - Flexion/scaption to tolerance
 - Abduction $\leq 90^\circ$
 - Pendulums, table slides

- **AAROM:** Active-assisted flexion
- **AROM:** Elbow, wrist, hand
- **Periscapular Strengthening (Week 2):**
 - Scapular retraction
 - Prone retraction
 - Supported scapular setting
 - Inferior glide
 - Low rows
- Ball squeezes

Criteria to Progress:

- PROM flexion/scaption $\geq 50\%$ of opposite side
- Abduction PROM $\leq 90^\circ$
- ER PROM $\leq 30^\circ$
- IR PROM $\geq 70^\circ$
- Pain $< 4/10$, no complications

Phase II – Intermediate Post-Op (Weeks 4–6)

Goals:

- Continue protecting repair
- Increase PROM
- Initiate AROM & AAROM with minimal substitutions
- Improve periscapular control
- Begin rotator cuff (ER) activation

Precautions / Restrictions:

- Use sling at night only; wean during day
- No lifting $>$ coffee cup
- Avoid weight-bearing through arms
- Avoid shoulder hyperextension

Therapeutic Exercises:

- Continue Phase I
- **PROM:** Full except ER $\leq 30^\circ$, abduction $\leq 90^\circ$
- **AAROM:**
 - Cane flexion/ER
 - Washcloth press
 - Seated cane-assisted elevation
- **AROM:**
 - Supine flexion, salutes, supine punches
- **Strengthening:**
 - ER isometrics
 - Physio ball rows, serratus punches
 - Biceps curls (band), triceps
- **Motor Control:**
 - Rhythmic stabilization (ER/flex $90-125^\circ$)
- **Stretching:**
 - Sidelying horizontal adduction

Criteria to Progress:

- PROM $\geq 75\%$ of contralateral side
- ER PROM = 30° , ABD PROM = 90°
- Minimal substitution patterns
- AROM elevation $\geq 100^\circ$
- Pain < 4/10, no complications

Phase III – Advanced Intermediate (Weeks 7–8)

Goals:

- Avoid overstressing capsule
- Improve AROM
- Advance strengthening
- Normalize scapular control

- Return to functional activity

Precautions:

- No lifting >10 lbs

Therapeutic Exercises:

- Continue prior phases
- Full PROM
- **AAROM/AROM:**
 - Table slides, wall ball rolls, wall climbs, pulleys
 - Seated scaption/flexion
 - Supine resistance elevation to 90°
- **Strengthening:**
 - Side-lying ER, band ER/IR
 - Resistance band rows, lawn mowers, robbery rows
- **Motor Control:**
 - Quadruped stabilization
 - PNF D1/D2 lifts
- **Stretching:**
 - IR with towel, sidelying horizontal adduction, sleeper stretch, triceps/lats

Criteria to Progress:

- Minimal to no substitutions
- Pain < 4/10

Phase IV – Transitional Phase (Weeks 9–11)

Goals:

- Maintain pain-free PROM
- Improve AROM
- Advance dynamic shoulder stability and endurance

Precautions:

- No lifting >10 lbs
- Avoid ER >80° abduction

Therapeutic Exercises:

- Continue prior interventions
- **Strengthening:**
 - Increase resistance
 - Push-up plus (knees), “W”s, dynamic hug
 - Forward punch, tripod holds
- **Motor Control:**
 - PNF with resistance
 - Wall slides with band

Criteria to Progress:

- Supine AROM Flex $\geq 140^\circ$, ABD $\geq 120^\circ$, ER $\geq 60^\circ$, IR $\geq 70^\circ$
- Elevation $\geq 120^\circ$ with good mechanics
- Pain < 2/10

Phase V – Advanced Strengthening (Weeks 12–16)

Goals:

- Maintain pain-free full ROM
- Optimize strength and function
- Return to daily and recreational activities

Therapeutic Exercises:

- Continue prior phases
- **Strengthening:**
 - ER/IR at 90° abduction
 - “T”, “Y” exercises

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Through Small Incisions

- Push-ups (wall and floor as tolerated)
- **Motor Control:**
 - Overhead stabilization
 - Rhythmic isometrics

Criteria for Full Return:

- Clearance from surgeon
- Pain-free full ROM
- Symmetric scapular mechanics
- Functional QuickDASH and Penn Scores

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