

AC Joint Reconstruction Protocol

Name _____ Date _____

Diagnosis _____

Procedure Date _____

Frequency 1 2 3 4 5 times/week Duration 1 2 3 4 5 6 weeks

FIRST THERAPY VISIT

- Therapy appointment should be scheduled for 3-5 days postoperatively.
- Goals of therapy visit include:
 - Surgical site evaluation (see below for instructions)
 - Brace/sling education and adjustment as needed
 - Review of therapy protocol, expectations, and plan
 - Initiation of early phase therapy ONLY if applicable (follow protocol as outlined below)
- Surgical site evaluation
 - Incisions are closed with one or combination of below methods
 - Staples
 - Nylon sutures (black sutures)
 - Monocryl sutures covered with steristrips or glue
 - Prineo dressing (clear adherent glue dressing)
- Dressing Care:
 - Wash hands with antibacterial soap before changing or examining the dressing.
 - If a **Tegaderm dressing** is present near the armpit, **DO NOT REMOVE IT**—this should remain intact until the first physician appointment. The rest of the dressing may be changed as instructed below.
 - There will be gauze and padding over the incisions, and the extremity may be wrapped with an ACE wrap.
 - The therapist should **change the surgical dressing using sterile technique**, which includes:
 - Sterile field
 - Sterile gloves
 - Betadine or chlorhexidine skin cleanser
 - Sterile supplies
 - **Do NOT remove** Steri-Strips, glue dressing, sutures, or staples.
 - The new dressing should include dry gauze and tape/ACE wrap. If there is a prineo dressing, no covering is needed. Ensure wounds are clean and dry before applying a new dressing, without removing Steri-Strips or glue.
 - Do **not** use **Tegaderm** unless it was applied during surgery or specifically stated in the orders.

If there are any concerns regarding the incisions or dressings, the therapist should call the office immediately at (219) 250-5038.

- **Post-Op Incision Care**
 - **Unless otherwise instructed, incisions must remain dry for seven days.**
 - **Showering:**
 - The incisions must be **sealed off in the shower** until cleared by the physician.
 - Prineo and glue dressings are water-resistant, and **incisions covered by these dressings may get wet after 3-5 days** (minimize water exposure).
 - **Do NOT scrub the area.** Instead, gently rinse with warm, soapy water.
 - Pat dry with a clean towel and **avoid lotions or creams.**
 - **Do NOT soak in a pool, bath, or hot tub** until cleared by the surgeon.
 - Wear **clean clothes** after showering and avoid pet hair or other contaminants near the surgical site.
 - **Do NOT apply ointments or medications** to the surgical area.

*****Range of motion is an important progression of therapy, but limiting swelling is important.
Respecting swelling will decrease pain and improve motion.*****

Weeks 0-4:

- Sling in neutral rotation for 6 weeks
 - Must wear padded abduction pillow with sling for 4 weeks then may remove and continue sling only for 2 additional weeks for a total of 6 weeks
- Codman exercises, elbow and wrist ROM
- Wrist and grip strengthening
- No shoulder motions for 4 weeks

Weeks 4-6:

- Begin gentle PROM □ AAROM with no end range stretching
- Pulleys / wand
- Wand ER with arm at side as tolerated
- Begin isometrics with arm at side – FF/ER/IR/ABD/ADD
- Start scapular stabilization exercises (traps/rhomboids/lev.scap./etc)
- No cross-arm adduction, follow ROM restrictions
- Heat before treatment, ice after treatment per therapist's discretion
- DC sling at 6 weeks

Weeks 6-12:

- Progress from AAROM □ AROM
- Advance to full ROM

Months 3-12:

- Advance to PRE strengthening
- Begin closed chain exercises (wall pushups)
- Begin resisted motions, plyometrics (ex. Weighted ball toss), proprioception (ex. body blade)
- Begin sports related rehab at 3 months, including advanced conditioning
- Gradually return to throwing at 4 ½ months – beginning with throwing mechanics
- Throw from pitcher's mound at 6 months
- MMI is usually at 12 months post-op

Comments:

Teach HEP _____

Modalities PRN

Every patient's therapy progression will vary to a degree depending on many factors. Please use your best clinical judgment on advancing a patient. If other ideas are considered to improve the patient's outcome do not hesitate to call.

Patient's recovery is a team approach: Patient, family/friend support, therapist, and surgeon. Every team member plays an important role in recovery.

Signature _____ **Date** _____