Acromioclavicular Joint Reconstruction
Accelerated Rehabilitation Protocol (for Athletes)

I. PHASE I – MOTION PHASE (Weeks 0-2)

Goals:  Initiate ROM exercises  
         Retard muscular atrophy  
         Decrease pain/inflammation

Range of Motion Exercises:
- L-bar AAROM  
  - Flexion to 60-70°, may to progress to 90° at day 10-14  
  - ER/IR (begin at 45 degrees abduction, motion to tolerance  
- Rope and pulley scaption (60 degrees first week or 10 days)  
- Pendulum exercises  
- Self-capsular stretches  
  *Note – Restrict horizontal Abduction/Adduction (often painful)

Strengthening Exercises:
- Isometrics  
  - ER, IR, Abd, Ext, Biceps, Triceps  
  *Note – No resisted shoulder flexion  
- Initiate ER/IR with exercise tubing at 0 degrees abduction when pain free (usually week 2)

Decrease Pain/Inflammation:
- Ice, NSAIDS, modalities  
- Ice applied directly over AC joint

II. PHASE II – INTERMEDIATE PHASE (Weeks 3-8)

Goals:  Gradually regain full ROM  
         Regain and improve muscular strength  
         Normalize arthrokinematics  
         Improve neuromuscular control of shoulder complex

Criteria to Progress to Phase II:
- Nearly full ROM  
- Minimal pain and tenderness  
- Stable AC joint on clinical exam  
- Good (4/5) MMT of ER/IR/Abd

Week 3
- Range of motion exercises  
  - Continue AAROM with L-bar  
  - Shoulder elevation to at least 90-100 degrees by week 4  
  - ER/IR at 45-60 degrees abduction – ROM to tolerance  
- Strengthening exercises  
  - Initiate isotonic strengthening (light resistance)  
  - Shoulder abduction  
  - Shoulder extension  
  - Shoulder ER/IR tubing  
  - Sidelying ER
• Biceps/triceps
• Prone horizontal abduction
• Prone rowing
• Prone extension
*Note – Restricted shoulder flexion prohibited (for 4 weeks)
• Initiate neuromuscular control exercises (PNF)
• Initiate manual resistance
• Continue use of modalities, ice as needed

Week 4
• Initiate ER/IR Lbar AAROM at 90 degrees of abduction
• Progress flexion to 145° with Lbar

Week 6
• Range of motion exercises
• Progress flexion to 150-160°
• Continue stretching program
• Strengthening exercises
  • Initiate Thrower’s Ten Program
  • Continue all strengthening exercises listed above
  • Initiate light resistance shoulder flexion
  • Initiate upper extremity endurance exercises
  • Initiate light isotonic resistance progression
  • NO shoulder press or bench press or pect deck or pullovers
  • Rhythmic stabilization exercise for shoulder flexion/extension
  • Program all shoulder and scapular strengthening exercises

III. PHASE III – DYNAMIC STRENGTHENING PHASE (Weeks 8-16)

Goals: Improve strength/power/endurance
Improve neuromuscular control/dynamic stability to the AC joint
Prepare athlete for overhead motion

Criteria to Enter Phase III:
Full nonpainful ROM
No pain or tenderness
Strength 70% of contralateral side

Strengthening Exercises:
• Continue isotonic strengthening exercises
• Initiate light bench press, shoulder press (progress weight slowly) begin at 12 weeks
• Continue with resistance exercises for:
  • Shoulder abduction
  • Shoulder ER/IR
  • Shoulder flexion
  • Latissimus dorsi (rowing, pull-downs) Pulldowns limit elevation
  • Biceps/triceps
  • Initiate tubing PNF patterns – limited ROM
  • Initiate ER/IR at 90 degrees abduction
  • Scapular strengthening (4 directions)
  • Emphasis on scapular retractors, elevators
  • Neuromuscular control exercises for glenohumeral and scapulothoracic joints
• Rhythmic stabilization
• Shoulder flexion/extension
• Shoulder ER/IR (90/90)
• Shoulder abduction/adduction
• PNF D₂ patterns
• Scapular retract/protract
• Scapular elevation/depress
• Program to plyometric upper extremity exercises
• Continue stretching to maintain mobility

IV. PHASE IV – RETURN TO ACTIVITY PHASE (Week 16+)

Goals: Progressively increase activities to prepare patient/athlete to full functional return

Criteria to Progress to Phase IV:
Full nonpainful ROM
No pain or tenderness
Isokinetic test that fulfills criteria (Shoulder F/E, Abd/Add)
Satisfactory clinical exam

• Initiate Interval Sports Program
• Continue all exercises listed in Phase III
• Progress resistance exercise levels and stretching