
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 60-70⁰, may to progress to 90⁰ 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 145⁰ with Lbar

Week 6

- Range of motion exercises
- Progress flexion to 150-160⁰
- 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