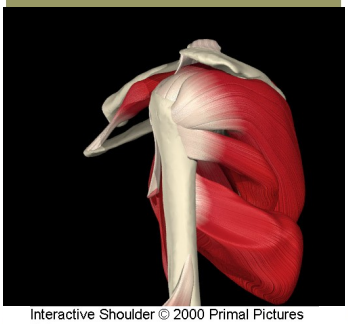
Rotator Cuff Repair
LARGE REPAIR



Interactive Shoulder © 2000 Primal Pictures Ltd.

PROFESSOR GEORGE MURRELL

Arthroscopic Rotator Cuff Repair

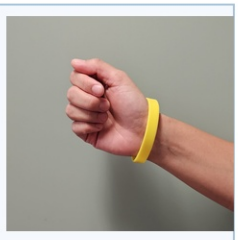
Rehabilitation Guidelines
LARGE REPAIR CONSERVATIVE PROGRAM
Phase 1 (0 - 6 weeks)

nexus | Kogarah Private Hospital

*You will have an **Ultrasling** which MUST be worn during the day for the first 6 weeks. You need to use the sling at night for the first 48 hours after your surgery, then if you are comfortable, you can remove it during the night.*

The aim of the sling is to take tension off the repair. In some instances, you may find that you are comfortable and pain free following surgery, however this is no reason to remove the sling. It is critical you wear the sling for the first 6 weeks otherwise your repair will fail to heal and the surgical outcome will be compromised. You may remove the sling to perform the exercises, to have a shower or to get dressed.

If you have a yellow band it is because Ultrasound elastography of your tendon indicates the repair is at risk of failing if you have another traumatic event (eg fall over, lift something heavy) — so be careful.



If you have a red band, elastography indicates the tendon is soft and may re-tear — so be VERY careful.

Durasoft *cold treatment commences and continues every 2 hours for 20 minutes regularly for the first 48 hours, and then as needed. Always keep at least one pack in the freezer.*

12 to 16 Hours

ACTIVITIES

You may be able to drive in approximately 2-3weeks.

RESTRICTIONS

No lifting or overhead work.

Local Anaesthetic Block

Moving your upper limb voluntarily is not possible until the block begins to wear off.
As the block begins to wear off, it is advisable to begin taking the pain killers prescribed for you (eg panadeine forte).

Day 1 until 6 weeks

Perform the following exercises 3 times per day within comfort. Try taking your pain relief medication before you start the exercises if required, but only as prescribed. Some clicking in the shoulder or pain during or immediately after exercise may be experienced with these exercises. Use the ice pack following exercise if required.

- **Grip Strengthening**

  This exercise can be done whilst the sling is on or off. Grip a ball or small towel and squeeze, hold for five seconds and release.

  Hold 5 seconds, Repeat 5-10 reps, 3x/day

- **Scapula Retraction/Depression**

  This exercise can be done whilst the sling is on or off. Depress your shoulders and simultaneously pinch your shoulder blades back together, hold for five seconds and release.

  Hold 5 secs, Repeat 10 reps, 3x/day

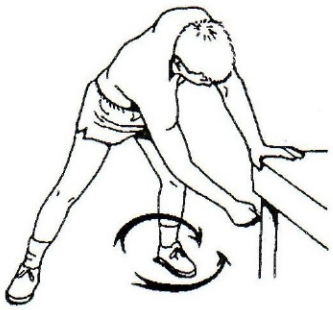
- **Pendulum**

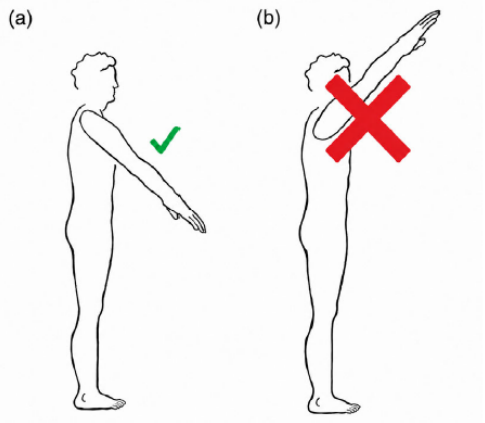
  Bend at your waist and rest with your good arm on a steady surface, eg a table, so that your operated arm is dangling in front of your body in a relaxed position.

  Swing the operated arm in a *clockwise direction* for 1 minute keeping the circles no more than 15cm in diameter during this time as comfort allows.

  Repeat by swinging the arm in an *anticlockwise direction* for a further 1 minute, again keeping the circles no more than 15cm in diameter during this time as comfort allows.

  Clockwise 1min, Anticlockwise 1min, 3x/day





- **Shoulder Flexion**

  Be very carful lifting your arm. We now know if you have too much shoulder motion at 6 weeks, the rotator cuff is more likely to retear. We want the shoulder to be a little stiff. As much as possible keep everything at waist level.

What To Expect...

The pain is often worse at night, especially the first few nights.

Don't forget to use the ice pack, and your pain relief medication.

Some patients find it more comfortable to sleep a little more vertical, for instance in a recliner.

It is common to get swelling about the arm, forearm, hand and fingers for the first 6 weeks.

You are not permitted to actively move your operated shoulder or lift any weight for the first 6 weeks. You are not allowed to perform any overhead activity for the first 12 weeks except when you are performing the exercises prescribed.

Contact our rooms if:
- you experience drainage or odour from the wound
- increased pain unrelieved with pain medication
- sudden, severe pain
- increased redness around the incision
- persistent fever above 38°C

1st Post-Op Visit

Post-Op Visit

- You will come back the week after the surgery for suture removal at your scheduled appointment in our rooms at The Church, 17 Kensington Street, Kogarah

At your Post-Op Visit we will:

- Remove your bulky dressing.
- Take out your stitches.
- Review your operation with you.

You can now:

- Get your shoulder wet.
- **Continue the Pendulum Exercise.**

The tendon takes at least 6 weeks to heal into the bone, enough to allow you to move the arm actively at 6 weeks; and up to 12months to fully and solidly heal to bone, so use the ultrasling and ***no overhead activities or lifting for six weeks***

PROFESSOR GEORGE MURRELL

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Other Milestones…

6 WEEKS

- 6 week post-operative physio check up with us.
- Removal of sling and commence Phase 2 exercises.
- Lifting close to your body up to ½ kg
- No overhead activities.

3 MONTHS

- 12 week post-operative physio check up with us.
- Commence Phase 3 exercises.
- Lifting close to your body up to 1kg
- No overhead activities

6 MONTHS

- Review with Professor George Murrell.
- Ultrasound scan with our sonographer to check the repair.