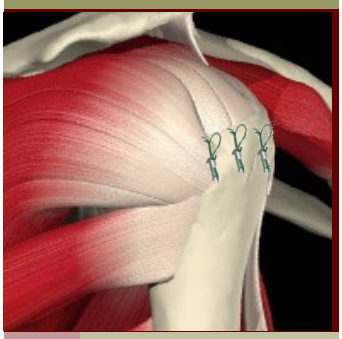
Rotator Cuff Repair
STANDARD REPAIR



PROFESSOR GEORGE MURRELL

Arthroscopic Rotator Cuff Repair

Rehabilitation Guidelines
STANDARD REPAIR
Phase 1 (0 - 6 weeks)

nexus | Kogarah Private Hospital

*You will have an **Ultrasling** which needs to 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 some tension off the repair. It is not necessary to wear the waist strap on the sling. You can remove the sling to perform the exercises. You can also remove the sling to have a shower, to get dressed or when sitting quietly if comfort allows - and on those occasions the sling comes off, the arm needs to be kept slightly elevated adjacent to the body, supported on pillows or an armrest.

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

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).

ACTIVITIES

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

RESTRICTIONS

No lifting or overhead work.

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

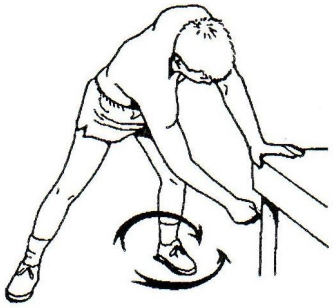
- **Pendulum**

  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 making the circles larger during this time as comfort allows.

  Repeat by swinging the arm in an *anticlockwise direction* for a further 1 minute, again making the circles larger each time only as comfort allows.

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



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

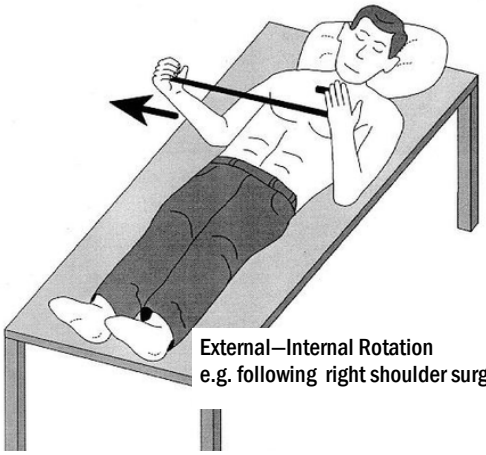
Day 14 (2 weeks) until 6 weeks

- **EXTERNAL - INTERNAL ROTATION**
- **ROTATION is limited from Neutral (arm by side) to a maximum of 30degrees External Rotation**

Lying on your back. Hold stick with both hands. Keep elbows bent at 90°.

Using your good hand, *gently* push the stick towards the operated side of your body, making sure you keep the elbow bent at 90° and close to your side. **DO NOT** rotate beyond 30degrees of external rotation.

Repeat 10 reps slowly, 2 x/day



External—Internal Rotation
e.g. following right shoulder surgery

- **SHOULDER FLEXION**
- **Do not push past 90degrees of elevation before 6 weeks postop**

Lying on your back. Try one of these options with the elbows bent at first, progressing to having your elbows straight.
For both options, only move the operated arm as comfort allows, up towards the level of your shoulder joint. **DO NOT** raise your shoulder beyond 90degrees of elevation.

Option 1. Hold stick with both hands. Slowly and very gently move the stick towards your shoulder joint. Use your good arm to move the operated arm.
Option 2. Clasp the operated arm's wrist and use the good arm to lift the operated arm, whilst keeping it relaxed through range, up towards the level of your shoulder joint.

Repeat 10 reps slowly, 2 x/day

Option 1. Shoulder Flexion using a stick

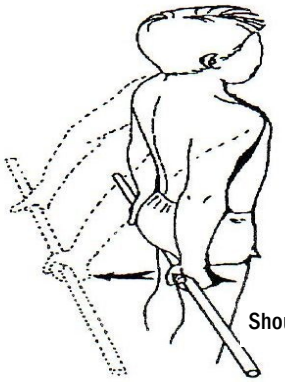
OR

Option 2. Shoulder Flexion using good hand to support wrist

- **SHOULDER EXTENSION**

Hold a stick using an *underhand* grip behind your back. Gently push the stick backwards away from your body only as comfort allows.

Repeat 10 reps slowly, 2 x/day



Shoulder Extension

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 Phase 1 exercises.**

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

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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 up to 1-2kg below chest level.
- No overhead activities except when you perform our prescribed exercises.

3 MONTHS

- 12 week post-operative physio check up with us.
- Commence Phase 3 exercises with use of yellow theraband.
- Commence light lifting close to your body between 2kg and 5kg depending on progress and the repair. Our 12 week physio review will instruct you on the lifting progressions.
- Occasional light unweighted overhead work.
- Light breast stroke swimming may be permitted from 4 months depending on repair and progress.

6 MONTHS

- Review with Professor George Murrell.
- Ultrasound scan with our sonographer to check the repair.
- Return to full work duties and sports if final clearance obtained from Prof Murrell.