

# SC Joint Reconstruction Rehabilitation Protocol

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**Patient:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DOS:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Surgeon Parameters

### Other Precautions:

Precautions above are patient-specific and supersede the general timeframes below. **Graft and capsule healing is the rate-limiting factor: the SC joint is not loaded, and scapular protraction and retraction are strictly avoided, for the first 6 wks.** Therapist to use clinical judgment to individualize exercise selection and pace within each phase.

| Phase                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Goals                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Precautions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Treatment Focus                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Phase 1</b><br>Weeks 0–6                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Goals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect the graft and capsule; control pain/swelling</li> <li>Gentle passive shoulder motion from day 1</li> <li>Maintain elbow/wrist/hand mobility</li> </ul> | <b>Precautions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sling full-time for 6 wks; off for hygiene and exercises</li> <li>No loading of the SC joint (lifting, pushing, pulling, weight bearing) and no active shoulder motion</li> <li>Avoid scapular protraction and retraction (no cross-body reaching or shoulder-blade squeezes)</li> </ul> | <b>Treatment Focus</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pendulums from POD 1</li> <li>Gentle passive ROM from POD 1, supine; do not force end range</li> <li>AROM elbow/wrist/hand and grip daily</li> <li>No scapular exercises this phase</li> </ul>            |
| ► <b>Advance to Phase 2 when:</b> wound healed, pain controlled, 6 wks of protection completed.                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Phase 2</b><br>Weeks 6–8                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Goals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wean sling</li> <li>Begin active-assisted ROM</li> <li>Reintroduce gentle scapular motion</li> </ul>                                                           | <b>Precautions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to protect the graft; no resisted loading</li> <li>No lifting, pushing, or pulling; no forced end-range stretching</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Treatment Focus</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AAROM from wk 6–7 (cane, pulley, table slides)</li> <li>Continue passive ROM toward full</li> <li>Gentle unresisted scapular mobility</li> </ul>                                                          |
| ► <b>Advance to Phase 3 when:</b> AAROM progressing pain-free with no SC joint pain, clicking, or new prominence.                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Phase 3</b><br>Weeks 8–12                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Goals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full AROM with normal scapular mechanics</li> <li>Begin progressive strengthening (wk 8–9)</li> </ul>                                                          | <b>Precautions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start light and advance as tolerated</li> <li>Advance pushing/pulling and loaded protraction/retraction (push-ups, rows) last</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Treatment Focus</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AAROM → AROM all planes</li> <li>Cuff, deltoid, and scapular strengthening (isometrics → bands → light weights)</li> <li>Scapular control and postural work</li> </ul>                                    |
| ► <b>Advance to Phase 4 when:</b> full pain-free AROM, symmetric scapular mechanics, strengthening pain-free.                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Phase 4</b><br>Weeks 12–24                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Goals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restore full strength and endurance</li> <li>Sport/work-specific training</li> <li>Full return to sport/activity at 5–6 months</li> </ul>                      | <b>Precautions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress load gradually; contact/collision and heavy overhead loading last</li> <li>Clearance based on strength, ROM, and pain, not time alone</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                | <b>Treatment Focus</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progressive weight training (machines → free weights)</li> <li>Closed-chain progression; plyometrics as appropriate</li> <li>Sport-specific drills</li> <li>Strength testing vs. contralateral</li> </ul> |
| ► <b>Full Release (typically 5–6 months / 20–24 wks):</b> full pain-free ROM, strength approaching contralateral, symmetric scapular mechanics, stable pain-free SC joint, sport/work-specific progression completed, cleared by physician. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

## Special Considerations

- Applies to graft reconstruction only; medial clavicle resection arthroplasty follows a much faster course (sling for comfort ≈2 wks, early ROM, full activity ≈3 months)
- New SC joint prominence, a pop, or sudden pain — stop and contact the surgeon

*Thank you for taking care of our patient.*

*This protocol serves as a general guideline and outline only. Our team defers to the clinical judgment and expertise of the treating physical therapist to make appropriate adjustments and modifications based on the individual patient's presentation, progress, and response to treatment. For any questions regarding this protocol, please contact Dr. Wollenman directly at (561) 215 – 0184.*