McBride Clinic
Orthopedics & Arthritis

SLAP Lesion Repair Protocol

Dr. Robert Klitzman

This rehabilitation protocol has been developed for the patient following a SLAP (Superior Labrum Anterior Posterior) repair. It is extremely important to protect the biceps/labral complex for 6 weeks post-operatively to allow appropriate healing. This protocol has been divided into phases. Each phase may vary slightly based on the individual patient and special circumstances.

The **overall goals** of the surgical procedure and rehabilitation are to:

- Control pain and inflammation
- Regain normal upper extremity strength and endurance
- Regain normal shoulder range of motion
- Achieve the level of function based on the orthopedic and patient goals

Early passive range of motion with noted limitations is highly beneficial to enhance circulation within the joint to promote healing. The physical therapy should be initiated within the first week following surgery. The supervised rehabilitation program is to be supplemented by a home fitness program where the patient performs the given exercises at home or at a gym facility.

Important post-operative signs to monitor include:

- Swelling of the shoulder and surrounding soft tissue
- Abnormal pain response, hypersensitive – an increase in night pain
- Severe rang of motion limitations
- Weakness in the upper extremity musculature

Return to activity requires both time and clinical evaluation. To safely and most efficiently return to normal or high level functional activity, the patient requires adequate strength, flexibility, and endurance. Functional evaluation including strength and range of motion testing is one method of evaluating a patient's readiness to return to activity. Return to intense activities following a SLAP repair require both a strenuous strengthening and range of motion program along with a period of time to allow for tissue healing. Symptoms such as pain, swelling, or instability should be closely monitored by the patient.

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Phase 1: Week 1-3
SLAP Repair
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WEEK	EXERCISE	GOAL
1-3	**ROM**	Gradual ↑
	Passive range of motion	
	-- Flexion/Elevation	0-60° wk 1
		0-75° wk 2
		0-90° wk 3
	Passive range of motion – scapular plane	
	-- External Rotation	0-15° wk 1
		0-30° wk 2
	-- Internal Rotation	as tolerated
	Pendulum exercises	
	Rope/Pulley (flex, abd, scaption)	
	Wand exercises – all planes within limitations	
	Posterior capsule stretch	
	Manual stretching and Grade I-II joint mobs	
	STRENGTH	
	Initiate submaximal isometrics – **NO** elbow flexion	
	Initiate scapular stabilizer strengthening	
	Initiate UBE without resistance	
	BRACE	
	Brace for 3 weeks or as noted by Dr. Klitzman	
	Brace removed for exercises above	
	MODALITIES	
	E-stim as needed	
	Ice 15-20 minutes	

GOALS OF PHASE:

- Promote healing of tissue
- Control pain and inflammation
- Gradual increase in ROM
- Independent in HEP
- Initiate muscle contraction

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Phase 2: Week 3-6
SLAP Repair
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WEEK	EXERCISE	GOAL
3-6	**ROM**	Gradual↑
	Passive range of motion	
	-- Flexion/Elevation	0-145°
	Passive range of motion – scapular plane	
	-- External rotation	0-50° wk 6
	-- Internal rotation	Full ROM wk 6
	Pendulum exercise	
	Posterior capsule stretch	
	Rope/Pulley (flex, abd, scaption)	
	Wand exercise – all planes within limitations	
	Manual stretching and Grade II-III to reach goals	
	STRENGTH	
	Continue isometric activities as in Phase 1	
	Initiate supine rhythmic stabilization at 90° flexion	
	Initiate IR/ER at neutral with tubing	
	Initiate forward flexion, scaption, empty can	
	Initiate sidelying ER and tricep strengthening	
	Push-up progression	
	Prone abduction with external rotation	
	Shoulder shrugs with resistance	
	Supine punches with resistance	
	Shoulder retraction with resistance	
	Initiate UBE for endurance	
	Prone rows	
	Initiate **light** biceps curls at week 3	
	MODALITIES	
	Ice 15-20 minutes	

GOALS OF PHASE:

- Control pain and inflammation
- Enhance upper extremity strength
- Gradual increase in ROM

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Phase 3: Week 6-12
SLAP Repair
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WEEK	EXERCISE	GOAL
6-12	**ROM** Continue all ROM from previous phases Posterior capsule stretching Towel stretching Rope/Pulley activities Wand exercises Manual stretching and Grade III-IV mobs	Full ROM 10-12 wk
	STRENGTH Continue all strengthening from previous phases increasing resistance and repetition Initiate plyotoss chest pass Initiate PNF patterns with theraband Initiate IR/ER exercises at 90° abduction Initiate isokinetic IR/ER at neutral at wk 10-12	
	MODALITIES Ice 15-20 minutes	

GOALS OF PHASE:

- Minimize pain and swelling
- Reach full ROM
- Improve upper extremity strength and endurance
- Enhance neuromuscular control
- Normalize arthrokinematics

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Phase 4: Week 12-24
SLAP Repair
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WEEK	EXERCISE
12-24	**ROM** Continue with all ROM activities from previous phases Posterior capsule stretching Towel stretching Grade III-IV joint mobs as needed for full ROM **STRENGTH** Progress strengthening program with increase in resistance and high speed repetition Progress with eccentric strengthening of posterior cuff and scapular musculature Initiate single arm plyotoss Progress rhythmic stabilization activities to include standing PNF patterns with tubing UBE for strength and endurance Initiate military press, bench press, lat pulldowns Initiate sport specific drills and functional acitivites Initiate interval throwing program week 16 Initiate light plyometric program week 12-16 Progress isokinetics to 90° abduction at high speeds **MODALITIES** Ice 15-20 minutes

GOALS OF PHASE:

- Full ROM
- Maximize upper extremity strength and endurance
- Maximize neuromuscular control
- Initiate sports specific training/functional training