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Rehabilitation Instructions: Reverse Total Shoulder Replacement

WEEKS 0–2: No formal outpatient therapy, healing phase at home for tissue recovery

- **Sling with pillow:** Wear at all times except for hygiene, grooming, home exercises
- **Arm position:** Arm at side or in front; when reclining, a pillow should be placed behind the elbow with sling in place so the elbow is always visible
- **Range of Motion:** No shoulder ROM (except pendulums); elbow/wrist motion ONLY
- **Exercises:** Pendulums when pain permits, gripping
- **Special precautions:** No weightbearing through operative arm (transferring, walker use, etc.)

THERAPY Phase I (Weeks 2 – 4 after surgery):

- **Sling:** Wear sling at all times with above exceptions until 4 weeks, then wean to discontinue
- **Arm position:** as above, preventing arm behind the back to prevent dislocation
- **Range of Motion:** PROM/AAROM to max 120 elevation in scapular plane and 30 ER
- **Exercises:** pendulums, ER with stick, consider pulley elevation if pain permits, isometrics with focus on deltoid
- **Modalities:** Per therapist, including electrical stimulation, ultrasound, heat (before), ice (after)
- **Special precautions:** No weightbearing through operative arm (transferring, walker use, etc.)

THERAPY Phase II (Weeks 4 – 12 after surgery):

- **Sling:** Not required, may consider wearing (without pillow) when outside the home for protection and as sign of vulnerability to others
- **Arm position:** Progress to full as tolerated
- **Range of Motion:** AROM without formal restrictions, initiate gentle functional IR up the back
- **Exercises:** continue Phase I, progress activities of daily living (initially arm at side including eating, brushing teeth, getting dressed, then arm away from body), light stretches such as table slides and wall walks as tolerated without forcing end range motion, advance as tolerated for concentric cuff, deltoid, scapular stabilizers with emphasis on bands and high rep, low weights (<5#)
- **Modalities:** As previous
- **Special precautions:** May use arm for transfers and weightbearing



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THERAPY Phase III (Weeks 12 – 16 after surgery):

- **Range of Motion:** increase as tolerated with gentle passive stretching at end ranges
- **Exercises:** continue Phase I/II with home program education, progress for work related tasks and hobbies, functional strength for all ADLs
- **Athletics:** light athletics at 12 weeks including swimming, water aerobics, jogging and higher level athletics at 16 weeks including tennis, golf, light weight training
- **Criteria for discharge home:** pain free active ROM for shoulder elevation, independence with home maintenance program