

AC JOINT/DISTAL CLAVICLE POSTOPERATIVE REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

Phase I (Weeks 0-6)—**No Shoulder ROM**

- **Sling immobilization** with supporting abduction pillow to be worn at all times except for showering
 - **Range of Motion:** No shoulder range of motion
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Phase II (Weeks 6-10)—**Begin Passive, Proceed to Active ROM**

- **Sling:** Discontinue sling immobilization at 6 weeks post-surgery
 - Physical therapy to begin at 6 weeks post surgery
 - **Range of Motion**
 - **6-8 weeks:** Gentle passive stretch
 - Goals: 140° Forward Flexion, 40° External Rotation with elbow at side, 60-80° Abduction without rotation, Limit Internal Rotation to 40° with the shoulder in the 60-80° abducted position
 - Maintain elbow at or anterior to mid-axillary line when patient is supine
 - **8-10 weeks:** Begin AAROM → AROM as tolerated
 - **Therapeutic Exercises:** Begin gentle AAROM exercises (supine position), gentle joint mobilizations (grades I and II)
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Phase III (Weeks 10-12)—**Achieve Full AROM**

- **Range of Motion** – Progress to full AROM without discomfort
 - **Therapeutic Exercises**
 - Continue with scapular strengthening
 - Continue and progress with Phase II exercises
 - Begin Internal/External Rotation Isometrics
 - Stretch posterior capsule when arm is warmed-up
 - Modalities per PT discretion
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Phase IV (Months 3-6)—**Begin Strengthening**

- **Range of Motion** – Full without discomfort
- **Therapeutic Exercises** – Advance strengthening as tolerated starting at 4 months: isometrics → therabands → light weights (1-5 lbs),
 - 8-12 repetitions/2-3 sets for Rotator Cuff, Deltoid and Scapular Stabilizers
 - Return to sports at 6 months if approved
- Modalities per PT discretion
 - No strengthening or resistance exercises until 4 months post-op.