



DR CHEN TU PROTOCOL SECURE / SMALL ROTATOR CUFF REPAIR

Physiotherapy follow-up recommended



The aim is to protect the tendon repair while gradually restoring movement, strength and function.

0–4 WEEKS

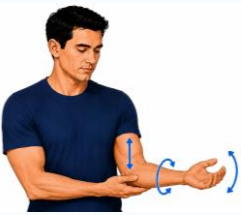
PROTECT THE REPAIR

- Sling for 4 weeks; check operation note for variations.
- Remove sling for hygiene and prescribed exercises.
- Keep neck, elbow, wrist and hand moving.
- Gentle protected shoulder movement as directed.
- Posture, shoulder blade and thoracic mobility.

IMPORTANT

- ✗ Avoid actively lifting the arm out to the side
- ✗ No pushing or pulling
- ✗ No hand behind back
- ✗ Do not force or stretch

Exercise examples only — your physiotherapist will teach technique and progression.



Hand / wrist / elbow



Pendulum



Scapular setting



Table slide

Early movement should be comfortable and protected — not a stretch.

TYPICAL MILESTONES

1

4–6 WEEKS

- Wean out of sling as comfortable.
- Sedentary work may be possible.
- Driving may be considered once safe and out of sling.

2

8–10 WEEKS

- Assisted movement around 75% of normal.
- Minimal strength and lifting.

3

~ 12 WEEKS

- Begin combined movement ranges.
- Continue strengthening and control.
- No zone restrictions if comfortable.

4

16+ WEEKS

- Aim for full active movement and near-normal function.
- Gradual manual work, lifting and higher-level activity as strength allows.

4–12 WEEKS

RESTORE MOVEMENT AND GENTLE CONTROL

- Wean from sling from 4–6 weeks as comfortable.
- Progress assisted to active shoulder movement.
- Hand behind back only within comfort; do not force.
- Begin gentle shoulder control and activation as guided by your physiotherapist



Assisted motion



Gentle rotation



Cuff control



Scapular control

Exercises are progressed by your physiotherapist.
Activation starts gently and only as directed

12+ WEEKS

BUILD STRENGTH AND RETURN TO ACTIVITY

- Progress rotator cuff strengthening and endurance through range
- Begin combined movement ranges as comfortable.
- Address any remaining movement deficits with physiotherapy.
- Introduce work or sport-specific rehabilitation.
- Return to heavier lifting and recreation gradually.



Cuff strength



Scapular strength



Shoulder control



Functional drills

Return to heavy activity is based on comfort, strength and control, not time alone.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER



Sling
4 weeks



Protect
repair



Do not
force
movement



Physio
guided

MOVEMENTS TO AVOID EARLY



Avoid actively lifting the arm out to the side