

AC Joint Reconstruction (w/o plate)

Individual patient circumstances may affect the guideline
(tear configuration, fixation used, associated procedures, etc.)

Phase	Goals	Precautions/Restrictions	Treatment
Weeks 0-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect surgical site Allow soft tissue healing Decrease pain and inflammation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sling with abduction pillow <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must wear at all times except for hygiene PROM by therapist only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROM for elbow, wrist and hand Plate – PROM or AAROM to shoulder height <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pendulums Flexion up to 70 degrees Abduction up to 70 degrees Shoulder ER/IR as pain allows Extension to 0 degrees May initiate deltoid and cuff isometrics at week 4
Weeks 6-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect surgical site Decrease pain and inflammation Initiate gently ROM Prevent further muscle atrophy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ROM as tolerated No horizontal abd until 8 weeks No flexion A/AROM past 90° until 12 weeks Extension may be unrestricted at 10 weeks No CKC exercises until 12 weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supine and progress to standing AAROM start progressing at week 7 AROM start progressing at week 9 Shoulder isometrics in all directions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closed chain and progress to open chain Scapular strengthening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gravity eliminated → gravity resisted Elbow/wrist/hand strengthening Neuromuscular control exercises/PNF
Weeks 12-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full ROM Normalize arthrokinematics Restore neuromuscular control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ROM as tolerated Stable AC joint with all motions Avoid contact activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AAROM → AROM for forward flexion Add resistance for shoulder exercises with emphasis on the scapular stabilizers Progress PRF exercises Rhythmic stabilization Continue scapular strengthening
Weeks 18+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full ROM Strength equal to contralateral side Return to sport 20-24 weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May return to prior level of activities between 6 to 9 months per surgeon clearance If discomfort persists > 1 hour, intensity of exercise must decrease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to progress PRE Initiate bench and shoulder press May add total body conditioning Plyometrics at 18 weeks Begin return to sport activities at 18 weeks May initiate return to throwing and overhead activities when strength goals are met

This guideline is not meant to be prescriptive but a recommendation to the rehabilitation process. Progress may vary based on specifics of injury and procedure.