

# Rotator Cuff Repair

## MR JONATHAN SPENCER

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The aim of surgery is to reduce pain, improve function, improve overall quality of life and mobility. Overall success rate is 95%.

### What to Expect

- 1-2 days in hospital
- 2 weeks of swelling and discomfort requiring significant pain killers
- 4-6 weeks in a sling
- 6-12 weeks for reasonable recovery
- 6-12 months for a good to full recovery

### Possible Complications of Surgery

- Wound infection
- Deep joint infection
- Deep vein thrombosis (DVT)
- Fracture
- Nerve injury
- Revision surgery
- Heart attack
- Chest infection
- Pulmonary embolism

### Risks

- 5% chance of minor complication
- 0.5-1% chance of serious complication
- Risk of dissatisfaction with the outcome of surgery

### Post Operation Wound Care

- Keep wool and crepe bandages on for 24 hours after the operation.
- Keep wounds clean, dry and covered for 2 weeks or until the wound is completely healed. If the dressings get soaked through, they will need to be changed.
- Do not soak the incision (ie. bath or pool) until the wound is completely healed.
- Mr Spencer mainly uses dissolvable stitches.
- If you have any concerns about your wound please contact Mr Spencer's rooms.

### *After your Rotator Cuff Repair : A Rehabilitation Guide*

All exercises performed should be within pain and comfort. Every shoulder repair progresses differently. Listen to your shoulder and discuss any concerns with Mr Spencer or your Physiotherapist. Notes in italics below are guidelines intended for your Physiotherapist.

#### Weeks 0-4

- Do not use your muscles in your arm to lift your arm or anything else. *Shoulder exercises must be passive (i.e. the operated arm muscles stay relaxed).*
- Ensure you take adequate pain relief medication.
- Wear a sling (day and night) for at least the first 4 weeks. Only take the sling off for exercises and a shower. Ensure the sling is comfortable and the arm relaxed.
- Do exercises 3-4 times/day (a good time is straight after a shower and/or half an hour after taking your pain medication). *Exercises include: pendular circles, elbow bending/straightening (ensure elbow straightening maintained whilst in sling), hand open/close, wrist supination/pronation, gently squeeze shoulder blades back together.*
- You can use ice 15-20 minutes, 3-4 times/day for pain relief (including after set exercises). The pendular exercise can also reduce aching.
- Sleeping: keep your sling on and try using pillows in different positions to support your arm so that you are comfortable and relaxed. You may find sitting semi-reclined more comfortable initially when sleeping.
- You may be able to return to work (in a non-physical role) from approximately 2 weeks. If you have a manual labour job it will be at least 3 months. Discuss this further with Mr Spencer.

#### Weeks 4-6 Aim: Regaining Movement

- Slowly wean off sling from 4 weeks.
- Physiotherapy treatment from 4 weeks onwards.
- *Continue passive range of movement exercises for your shoulder within pain and comfort.*
- Driving when you feel safe and competent to do so (not before 4 weeks and you must be out of the sling). Before returning to driving, you should contact your insurance company to ensure you are covered to drive.

#### Weeks 6-12 Aim: Continue to gain shoulder movement and a gradual return to using muscles

- Continue to aim towards achieving a full range of movement with your shoulder.
- You can start using your arm for activities of daily living, initially with your elbow at your side. Be careful not to strain your arm i.e. pushing yourself up out of a chair or the bath.
- *6 weeks: Active-assisted range of movement exercises.*
- *8 weeks: Start Isometric strengthening exercises.*
- *10 weeks: Slowly progress strength exercises to active exercises through painfree range as able.*
- *10 weeks: Swimming – you can attempt a gentle modified breaststroke, it should be pain free and comfortable.*

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Weeks 12+ Aim: Continue to regain movement and start to increase strength

- Able to try swimming overarm stroke
- Return to sport as advised by your surgeon
- Specific sport/work/leisure activity rehabilitation as able, including scapular control
- *Progressive strengthening exercises as tolerated*

6 - 9 Months

- Able to return to non-contact sport (6 months), contact sport (9 months).
- Able to return to gardening, digging, manual work
- Discuss these all with Mr Spencer.