MELBOURNE
ARM CLINIC

AC JOINT STABILISATION PROTOCOL

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MBBS (Melb), BMedSci, FRACS (Ortho), FAOrthA

ORTHOPAEDIC SHOULDER SURGEON

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SLING DURATION	WHEN DO I START PHYSIO?	WHEN CAN I START DRIVING?
4 Weeks.	You will begin physiotherapy two weeks after your operation.	In approx 4-6 weeks, when you're no longer using the sling and have full control of the vehicle.

ACUTE PHASE (0-4 WEEKS)

GOALS:

Reduce pain

Respect surgical repair

Begin controlled range of movement

REHABILITATION:

*Safe zone: passive forward flexion to maximum 90°, passive external rotation to neutral

Teach scapular setting, postural correction

Pendular exercises

From 2 weeks, commence assisted active forward flexion to 60° (eg with cane, stick)

Elbow, wrist and hand exercises

No active forward elevation or abduction exercises

CRITERIA FOR PROGRESSION:

Control of pain

INTERMEDIATE PHASE (4-8 WEEKS)

GOALS:

Discard use of sling

Restore functional range of movement

Re-educate cuff recruitment and scapular control through range

Enhance proprioception

Preserve surgical repair integrity

REHABILITATION:

Progress range of movement beginning with passive movement, and then increasing active assisted and active as tolerated, whilst respecting pain

Commence cuff strengthening regime

Ensure dynamic scapular control through range

Hydrotherapy permitted

CRITERIA FOR PROGRESSION:

Pain free range of movement

Scapular and cuff musculature control through range

LATE PHASE (>8 WEEKS)

GOALS:

Restore full range of movement

Optimise cuff and scapular control under load

Enhance shoulder power, strength and endurance

REHABILITATION:

Continue to increase range of movement to functional range

Strengthening and endurance exercises for cuff and scapular musculature

GUIDELINES FOR RETURN TO FUNCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

LIFTING	Light lifting at 6 weeks, avoid heavy lifting for 3 months.
SWIMMING	Breaststroke 6 weeks, freestyle 12 weeks.
GOLF	3 months.