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Shoulder Manipulation / Arthroscopic Capsular Release Rehabilitation Protocol

Capsular release is generally reserved for those individuals who have failed conservative treatment for ongoing shoulder stiffness and pain, otherwise known as adhesive capsulitis. In general, conservative treatment consists of anti-inflammatory medications, physical therapy, as well as corticosteroid injections. If these modalities fail, the patient becomes a candidate for arthroscopy versus manipulation under anesthesia of the affected shoulder, or a combination of both. Manipulation under anesthesia is a procedure that occurs with the patient fully anesthetized and the shoulder is essentially gently manipulated to break up the adhesions of the capsule to allow for full range of motion. If the adhesions cannot be broken down with manipulation, an arthroscopic procedure is indicated. The patient is prepped for an arthroscopic procedure and the capsule is manually released under direct visualization using arthroscopic techniques. Post-surgically the patient is placed in a sling for comfort as well as control of the arm, as post-operative pain is generally managed with a regional anesthetic block.

First Post-op Week:

- In general, daily physical therapy is begun, including maintaining passive and active range of motion that was accomplished during the procedure. It is common that a home continuous passive range of motion unit is initiated for home use.
- Sling is discontinued during this time, if possible.
- Home exercises, including wall walks and pendulums are initiated.
- Wound care is initiated after post-operative dressing is removed at Day 2 or 3

Week 1 - 4

- Continued aggressive therapy is continued to regain full range of motion

Goals

- Reduction of pain
- Maintenance of range of motion.
- Physical therapy is generally reduced to 3x week
- Home exercise program is utilized

Week 4 - 6

- Full range of motion is the goal
- Continued progressive strengthening
- Discontinuance of physical therapy as allowed
- Patient generally discharged to home maintenance program during this time.