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Proximal Humerus – Non-Operative Treatment Rehabilitation Guidelines

Proximal Humerus Fractures: Nonoperative Treatment

Outpatient Physiotherapy Phase 1: (Weeks 2-4)

ROM

- Cervical, elbow and wrist ROM
 - Pendulum exercises
 - Instruct in home program **Strengthening**
 - No cuff strengthening
 - Begin and instruct in program of postural correction
 - May begin scapular retraction and depression
 - Grip strengthening **Sling**
- Arm in sling at all times except for exercises and bathing; Includes sling at night (sleeping in recliner chair optimal); Discontinue sling between 2-4 weeks

Outpatient Physiotherapy Phase 2: (Weeks 5-8)

ROM

- Begin self-assisted forward elevation to 90° and progress in 20° increments per week
- May use pulleys
- Begin self-assisted ER with progressive return to full in 20° increments per week
- IR in scapular plane as tolerated (No IR behind back)
- No cross body adduction
- Grade I-II scapulothoracic and glenohumeral mobilizations **Strength**
- No cuff strengthening
- Continue scapular retraction and depression
- Lower extremity aerobic conditioning **Other**
- Modalities to decrease pain and inflammation
- Cryotherapy as necessary

Outpatient Physiotherapy Phase 3: (Weeks 9-12) ROM

- Progressive return to full forward elevation and external rotation
- May begin posterior capsular stretching program

- May begin IR behind back
- Grade III-IV glenohumeral and scapulothoracic mobilizations
- Begin anterior chest wall stretches (pectoralis minor) **Strength**
- Instruct in home program and begin submaximal isometrics in flexion, abduction, IR, ER and extension
- Add progressive isotonic with low resistance, high repetitions as tolerated
- Emphasize anterior deltoid strength and scapular stabilization
- Emphasize upper trapezius, serratus anterior force couple rehabilitation to create stable scapular base
- Assess for and correct compensatory movement patterns
- UBE with low resistance
- Continue aerobic conditioning

Outpatient Physiotherapy Phase 4: (> Week 12) ROM

- Progressive return to full motion in all planes
 - Emphasize posterior capsule stretching
 - Maintenance home flexibility program **Strength**
- Continue rotator cuff and scapular strengthening program
 - Progressive increase in resistance as strength improves
 - Continue UBE with progressive resistance as tolerated
 - Recreation/vocation specific rehabilitation
 - Maintenance aerobic conditioning home program