

PHYSICAL THERAPY PRESCRIPTION

SETH C. GAMRADT, MD

ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY AND SPORTS MEDICINE

Keck School of Medicine of USC

1520 San Pablo Street, Suite 2000

Los Angeles, CA 90033

Phone: 323.442.5860

Fax: 323.442.6952

www.gamradtortho.com

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Medicine of USC

PATIENT STICKER

SWIMMER'S SHOULDER PHYSICAL THERAPY PRESCRIPTION

DATE _____

Underlying problem includes:

- Weakness / fatigue of scapular stabilizers (especially retractors)
- Inflexibility of pectoral muscles
- Anterior capsular laxity
- Posterior capsular/Rotator cuff tightness
- Posterior Rotator cuff weakness

- Rx:**
- Development of core strength: lumbar stabilization, abdominals, pelvic girdle
 - Avoid/correct excessive anterior pelvic tilt/lumbar lordosis
 - Initial phase (Acute pain) :
 - Modalities as needed – Phonophoresis / Iontophoresis / Soft Tissue Mobilization / E-stim Cryotherapy / Ultrasound
 - Submaximal isometrics
 - Progress to isotonic exercises
 - Endurance training for scapular stabilizers: focus on Serratus Anterior, Rhomboids, Lower Trapezius, and Subscapularis :
 - Push-ups with a plus
 - Scapular elevation (scaption)
 - Rows
 - Press-ups
 - Upper body ergometry for endurance training
 - Prone lying horizontal flys
 - Side-lying external rotation, prone rowing into external rotation
 - Push-ups onto a ball
 - Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation (PNF) patterns to facilitate agonist / antagonist muscle co-contractions
 - Rotator cuff (external rotation) strengthening : goal is ER:IR ratio at least 65%
 - Stretching of pectoral muscles, posterior capsule, posterior rotator cuff, latissimus
 - Generally do not need to stretch anterior shoulder

Treatment: _____ times per week

Duration: _____ weeks

**Please send progress notes.

Physician's Signature: _____

Seth C. Gamradt, MD, Attending Orthopaedic Surgeon, USC

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SHOULDER PAIN IN SWIMMING

PATHOLOGY

Underlying pathology is Rotator Cuff tendonitis / bursitis due to:

- 1) Impingement of Rotator Cuff tendons during swimming stroke.
- 2) Rotator Cuff fatigue due to overuse – contributes to impingement.
- 3) Imbalance between internal and external rotators, resulting in impingement.
- 4) Joint laxity often plays some role.

STROKE FLAWS ASSOCIATED WITH SHOULDER PAIN

- 1) Hand entry that crosses midline
- 2) Impingement exacerbated by thumb-first hand entry
- 3) Lack of body roll
- 4) Breathing only on one side may lead to compensatory cross-over on non-breathing side
- 5) Improper head position (eyes forward is WRONG > this impedes normal scapulothoracic motion)
- 6) New freestyle teaching is to use early hand exit
- 7) Proper balance in water comes from pushing the center of buoyancy (sternum) and head into water in order to float the legs

STROKE ALTERATIONS TO DECREASE PAIN

- 1) Avoid straight arm recovery
- 2) More body roll
- 3) Breathe bilateral
- 4) Early catch, early recovery
- 5) Don't keep head up (look down)
- 6) Little finger first hand entry

TREATMENT FOR EARLY PHASE

- 1) Ice BEFORE and AFTER practice
- 2) Proper warm-up before hard training sets
- 3) Identify and minimize / avoid strokes which precipitate pain. Train with different strokes. Decrease use of hand paddles. Do more kicking sets to provide shoulder rest.
- 4) Stretching shoulder and periscapular muscles. Emphasize posterior shoulder capsule stretching.
- 5) Specific strengthening exercises for external rotators, scapular stabilizer muscles. Perform exercises below horizontal (below eye level).

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BASIC PRINCIPLES

- 1) Rotator Cuff and scapular stabilizer strengthening
- 2) Avoidance of impingement positions during rehabilitation
- 3) Restoration of muscle strength, balance, and flexibility
- 4) Emphasis on Serratus Anterior and Subscapularis

STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

General Principles: Start with low loads. As endurance improves, may progress to sport-mimicking exercise, such as swim bench. Maintain proper scapulohumeral rhythm during exercises. Exercises should begin in the scapular plane. Start with open chain exercises.

IF PAIN PROGRESSES

- 1) Reduction in training volume and dryland training. Eliminate painful strokes for 2-3 weeks, then gradually resume.
- 2) Continue icing, stretching.
- 3) Anti-inflammatory medication (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication)
- 4) Consider subacromial injection (only if refractory)
- 5) X-Ray/MRI