



Scapular Dyskinesia Rehabilitation Protocol

Scapular dyskinesia refers to abnormal movement of the scapula during shoulder motion, often leading to shoulder pain and dysfunction. Addressing scapular dyskinesia involves exercises aimed at correcting scapular positioning, strengthening scapular stabilizers, and improving overall shoulder mechanics.

Phase 1: Initial Assessment and Pain Management

- **Objective:** Identify specific patterns of dyskinesia and address any pain or inflammation.
- **Assessment:** Thorough evaluation of shoulder and scapular movement, strength, and posture.
- **Pain Management:** Use ice, heat, or other modalities as needed to manage pain.
- **Activity Modification:** Educate on avoiding activities or positions that exacerbate symptoms.

Phase 2: Mobility and Postural Correction

- **Objective:** Improve thoracic spine mobility and correct postural imbalances.
- **Thoracic Mobility Exercises:** Incorporate exercises to increase thoracic extension and rotation, such as foam roller stretches and thoracic spine rotations.
- **Postural Education:** Emphasize proper posture, especially during prolonged sitting or standing, to reduce scapular protraction and downward rotation.
- **Stretching:** Focus on stretching tight muscles that may contribute to dyskinesia, including the pectoralis minor, upper trapezius, and levator scapulae.

Phase 3: Scapular Stabilization and Strengthening

- **Objective:** Strengthen scapular stabilizers and correct scapular movement patterns.
- **Isometric Exercises:** Begin with isometric holds to strengthen the serratus anterior, lower trapezius, and rhomboids without causing unnecessary scapular movement.
- **Dynamic Scapular Stabilization Exercises:** Gradually progress to dynamic exercises such as wall push-ups, scapular squeezes, prone Ys, Ts, and Ws, focusing on maintaining proper scapular alignment and movement.
- **Closed-Chain Exercises:** Integrate closed-chain exercises like plank variations to engage the scapular stabilizers in a functional manner.

Phase 4: Integration of Scapular Control into Functional Activities

- **Objective:** Ensure proper scapular movement during functional and sport-specific activities.
- **Progressive Resistance Training:** Incorporate exercises that increase resistance and complexity, such as push-ups, rows, and overhead presses, ensuring correct scapular motion throughout.
- **Sport-Specific Drills:** For athletes, include drills that mimic the demands of their sport, focusing on maintaining proper scapular control.
- **Proprioceptive and Neuromuscular Training:** Enhance proprioception and coordination with exercises that challenge the shoulder complex in various positions and movements.



- **Education:** Teach the individual about the role of the scapula in shoulder function and the importance of maintaining proper scapular alignment.
- **Manual Therapy:** As appropriate, include manual therapy techniques (e.g., soft tissue mobilization, joint mobilizations) to address any restrictions that may be contributing to dyskinesia.
- **Reassessment:** Regularly assess scapular movement and shoulder function to monitor progress and adjust the treatment plan as necessary.

Monitoring and Adjustment

- Continuous evaluation of pain, scapular movement, shoulder function, and progression towards individual goals is essential to tailor the protocol effectively.

A successful rehabilitation program for scapular dyskinesia requires a comprehensive approach that addresses underlying causes, strengthens the scapular stabilizers, and integrates proper scapular movement into all shoulder activities. Collaboration with a physical therapist to customize and progress the treatment plan based on individual response is crucial for optimal recovery.