**AC joint reconstruction - post op rehabilitation & physiotherapy**

**0 - 6 weeks**

* Sling to be worn 24X7 except -
* Permitted to remove sling when seated with the **elbow & forearm** completely supported, the hand can be used for eating, computer and paperwork etc.
* It’s important to move the fingers, hand and elbow as normal as possible.
* With the wounds covered by a waterproof dressing shower with arm resting in triangular sling or supported on the shower soap dish.

**Review with surgeon at 2 weeks – then if permitted**

* Commence gentle passive elevation 0-90°, using the opposite hand to support the elbow, beginning supine, then progressing to the erect position. Aim for 180° by week 12.
* Gentle passive external rotation, aiming for 100% by week 12
* Pendulum exercises - from 2 weeks, when the wound has healed; let the arm float about gently in a pool with to & fro movements
* Active elbow, wrist, hand and movements
* Begin static active deltoid and scapular stabiliser toning exercises.
* **No abduction, internal rotation or extension exercises**

**6 -12 weeks**

**After review with surgeon at 6 week mark**

* Remove sling though you may need to wear the sling if in a rowdy crowd setting.
* Continue passive stretching programme for elevation, external and begin internal rotation.
* Introduce active assisted then active movements of elevation, external and internal rotation, beginning supine (lying down) progressing to erect.
* Begin breaststroke stretching, in a warm pool, standing initially then doing laps, 4 times weekly 20 minutes
* No abduction exercises of any form; until all other shoulder movement is normal including scapulo-thoracic rhythm (premature abduction with a stiff shoulder can result in recurrence of impingement).

**12 -16 weeks**

* Work toward full active range of elevation, external and internal rotation.
* Continue terminal stretching including posterior stretches gradually.
* Begin resistance strengthening using Theraband
* Avoid repetitive overhead use of the arm
* Continue breaststroke swimming stretch program.
* Return to light manual labour

**16-24 weeks**

Progress to advanced stretching and strengthening gradually as tolerated by the patient.

Gradually increase overhead use of the arm.

Increase weights at work gradually looking to a trial return to heavy labour around 24 weeks

**@ 6 months**

Trial return to overhead / heavy / labouring work on a graduated basis.

Return to contact sports when strength is equal to un-operated side.

**Patient to continue their own stretching and strengthening program by themselves as part of their own daily exercise regime.**