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Lower Trapezius Tendon Transfer

REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

PHASE	RANGE OF MOTION	IMMOBILIZER	THERAPEUTIC EXERCISE
Phase I **0–8 weeks** GOAL TO ADVANCE *Transfer protected; no complications*	NO shoulder motion. No internal rotation, reaching behind back or across the body. Elbow, wrist and hand motion allowed in brace	External rotation (gunslinger) brace at all times, including sleep. Showering: arm at side, forearm supported by other hand	No formal therapy. Elbow/wrist/hand ROM, grip, ice. No pushing, pulling or weight bearing through the arm
Phase II **8–16 weeks** GOAL TO ADVANCE *Active elevation with good transfer firing; minimal pain*	Active-assisted → active motion in comfortable range, emphasizing scaption and ER. Flexion begins about 90° and progresses overhead. NO internal rotation and NO stretching*	Wean brace with physician clearance	Transfer retraining†: supine assisted flexion, cane scaption, rail and wall slides in "V" pattern. Pool motion with feet on floor. No resistance with the operated arm
Phase III **16–24 weeks** GOAL TO ADVANCE *Good mechanics with light resistance; pain-free light daily tasks*	Continue active motion. Internal rotation when cleared by physician, without force. No stretching*	None	Light bands: supine ER isometrics → isotonics, supine press-up to 90° then overhead, standing ER with elevation, rows. No supporting body weight on the hands
Phase IV **24+ weeks** GOAL TO ADVANCE *Physician clearance*	Full without discomfort	None	Light weights, high repetitions: T/Y, biceps/triceps, wall push-ups, diagonal patterns; swimming. No heavy or forceful lifting; gradual return to work and sport**

NOTES

*Stretching into internal rotation or across the body pulls on the healing transfer and can loosen it

†The lower trapezius now externally rotates and elevates the arm. Therapy cues are to set the shoulder blade down and back while lifting the arm

**If approved by physician