

## REHABILITATION FOLLOWING SPORTS HERNIA REPAIR

### Precautions (first 2 weeks):

- Avoid trunk/hip hyperextension
- Avoid aggressive rectus abdominus contractions
- No heavy lifting
- Avoid activities that increases intraabdominal pressure

### I. **Phase I – Immediate Postoperative Phase Protective Phase (Day 1 to Week 2)**

#### Goals:

Gradually restore ROM & Flexibility  
Diminish pain and inflammation  
Postural education  
Appropriate Transverse Abdominus Recruitment

#### **Week 1:**

- Cryotherapy
- Gentle stretching hamstrings, adductors, quadriceps
- Hip AAROM/PROM
- Hip mobilization (as needed) grade I & II
- Treadmill walking 15-20 minutes
- Light strengthening
  - Transverse abdominus recruitment (neutral spine)
  - Sidelying Hip Abduction

#### **Week 2:**

- Standing Hip Abduction & Adduction AROM
- Standing Hip Flexion/Extension AROM
- Hip ER/IR t-band
- Clam shells
- Mini-Squats
- lunges
- Heel raises
- Posterior pelvic tilts
- Stretch hamstrings, quads, iliopsoas, adductors
- Continue hip AAROM/PROM

### II. **Phase II – Intermediate Phase: Moderate Protection Phase (Week 3-4)**

Goals: Restore full painfree hip and lumbar spine ROM  
Protect surgical repair  
Progress TA strengthening/stabilization training

#### Criteria to enter Phase II:

- 1) Minimal pain
- 2) Improving hip and lumbar spine ROM
- 3) Ability to find neutral spine and recruit TA

### **Week 3-4:**

- Progress strengthening program
- Leg Press
- 4-way hip machine
- Lunges
- Step downs
- Progress stabilization exercises (emphasizing neutral spine/TA contraction)
- Bridging progression
- Quadruped progression 4-point → 3-point → 2-point support
- Plank progression
- Gentle curl-ups
- Progress to single leg activities (stable to unstable surface, progress to perturbations)
- Continue hip AAROM/PROM
- Lateral band walking
- Hip mobilizations (as needed) grade III & IV
- More aggressive (pain free) stretching, hamstrings, quad, iliopsoas, adductors
- Scar mobilizations
- Bike
- Elliptical
- Initiate jogging, pool or alter g treadmill

### **III. Phase III – Advanced Exercise Phase (Weeks 4-5)**

Goals: Good pelvic stabilization with ambulation  
Good pelvic and lumbar spine stabilization with single leg activity  
Initiate light sport activity

Criteria to enter Phase III:

- 1) Full non-painful ROM of lumbar spine and hips
- 2) Good TA recruitment
- 3) Able to maintain neutral spine with standing and single leg activity

### **Weeks 4-5:**

- Continue all stretching & flexibility exercises as above
- Lumbar and hip mobilization as needed
- Progress core and hip strengthening
- Initiate plyometric training
- Progress jogging
- Return to light sport specific activity (no quick change of direction, no start/stop)

### **IV. Phase IV – Return to Activity Phase (Weeks 5-6)**

Goals: Return to full sport activity without pain

Criteria to enter Phase IV:

- 1) Full non-painful lumbar and hip ROM
- 2) Satisfactory clinical exam
- 3) No pain with light sport specific activity

### **Weeks 5-6:**

- Continue all strengthening/flexibility exercises
- Continue lumbar and hip mobilization as needed
- Initiate plant/pivot
- Initiate start/stop
- Increase speed training/sprinting

**Criteria to Return to Competition:**

- Full painfree ROM & flexibility
- Hip strength equal to opposite side
- Ability to perform sport specific drills at satisfactory level & without pain
- Satisfactory Clinical Exam
- Approval by Physician