

## **Guidelines for Returning to Weight Training After Shoulder Repair**

You should not return to training using heavy weights or on weight machines until your doctor determines that it is safe.

In general, it is usually safe to return to heavier weight training at three months following labrum repairs.

Before embarking on a weight-training program, you should have full range of shoulder motion and normal strength in the rotator cuff and scapular muscles. The doctor or a physical therapist will test your motion and strength before you start weight training.

To begin your weight-training program, you can start with 3 sets of 15-20 repetitions. Training with high repetitions sets ensures that the weights that you are using are not too heavy.

NEVER perform any weight training exercise to the point of muscle failure. "Muscle failure" occurs when, in performing a weight training exercise, the muscle is no longer able to provide the energy necessary to contract and move the joint(s) involved in the exercise. Joint, muscle, and tendon injuries are more likely to occur when muscle failure occurs.

The following weight training exercises should be avoided after Bankart repair for shoulder instability:

1. Pull downs behind-the-neck (wide-grip)
2. Behind-the-neck shoulder press
3. Wide-grip bench press
4. Standing lateral deltoid raises
5. Triceps press overhead

The following exercises require special cautions:

1. Pull downs should only be done in front of the head, to the chest, with a medium (not wide) grip.
2. Shoulder press overhead should be done carefully, avoiding heavy weights. If doing shoulder presses, always start with the hand in front of the shoulder and end overhead where you can still see your hand. For persons using barbells, this is the "military press".
3. If bench pressing, your grip should be no wider than the width of your shoulders. Avoid any exercises using grips wider or narrower than shoulder width.
4. Lateral deltoid raises should be avoided because of impinging and wearing effect on the rotator cuff. Forward raises in the "thumbs-up" position are usually safer and can be done with reasonable weights. Lateral raises from the prone or bent over position can be done as a substitute for standing lateral deltoid raises.
5. When doing incline bench press with barbells, there is a danger of shoulder dislocation if the lifter loses control of the bar when returning the barbell to the rack of the incline press. Always have a spotter for removing and replacing the barbell in the exercise.
6. If you are doing any type of "chest-fly", keep in mind the following precautions. Do not do any chest-fly exercise with straight elbows. Always allow the elbows to bend and never lower your hands (holding dumbbells) below the level of your chest.
7. If you are using a "Pec-Deck" machine, never let the weight stretch the arms so that your elbows pass behind your chin. You can set the arms on this machine a few clicks forward to adjust the maximum motion allowed.

8. If you are performing “dips” using a set of parallel bars, never lower yourself below the point where the elbows reach a 90-degree angle.
9. For triceps exercises, triceps pushdowns on a pulley system are safe as well as bent-over triceps extensions.
10. When doing the upright-rowing exercise, keep your grip at least 12 inches apart. When pulling the bar upward towards the chin, do not raise the bar higher than the point at which the elbow reaches shoulder level.

Exercises Usually Problem-Free

6. Biceps Curls
7. Cable and bent-over rowing
8. Shoulder shrugs

If your goal is returning to high-level weight training or weightlifting, it will take at least 3-6 months of cautious, gradual progression to return to top form. In general, avoid increasing the amount of weight lifted by more than 10-15% (at a time) of your present working weight every 10-14 days.

Remember: Weight training is beneficial to improve muscular strength and protect the joints from injury. If done improperly by using too much weight and/or improper technique, weight training can cause serious injury.

Remember: Your shoulder is a repaired shoulder! An ounce of common sense and restraint will help prevent a recurrent injury.