



AUCKLAND BONE AND JOINT SURGERY

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GUIDELINES FOR RETURNING TO WEIGHT TRAINING AFTER SHOULDER LABRAL REPAIR

You should not return to training using heavy weights or on weight machines until Dr. Boyle determines that it is safe. It is generally safe to return to heavier weight training at three months following shoulder labral repair.

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

When starting your weight training program, you can start with 3 sets of 15-20 repetitions. Training with high repetition 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 particular exercise. Joint, muscle and tendon injuries are more likely to occur when muscle failure occurs.

The following weight training exercises should be avoided after shoulder labral repair:

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. Overhead triceps press

The following exercises require special caution after shoulder labral repair:

1. Pull downs should only be done in front of the head, to the chest, with a medium (not wide) grip.
2. Overhead shoulder press should be done carefully, avoiding heavy weights. If undertaking shoulder press, always start with the hand in front of the shoulder and finish overhead where you can still see your hand.

3. If undertaking bench press, 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 the impinging and wearing effect on the rotator cuff. Forward raises in the “thumb-up” position are usually safer and can be performed using reasonable weights. Lateral raises from the prone or bent over position can be undertaken as a substitute for standing lateral deltoid raises.
5. When undertaking incline bench press with a barbell, there is a danger of shoulder dislocation if you lose control of the bar when returning the barbell to the rack of the incline bench. Always have a spotter for removing and replacing the barbell when performing this exercise.
6. If you are performing any type of chest fly exercise, keep in mind the following precautions: do not undertake 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 should set the arms on this machine a few clicks forward to adjust the maximum motion allowed.
8. If you are performing tricep dips using a set of parallel bars, never lower yourself below the point where the elbows reach a 90-degree angle.
9. Triceps pushdowns on a pulley system and bent over triceps extensions are the safest triceps exercises for patients after shoulder labral repair.
10. When performing upright rows, keep your grip at least 30 cm apart. When pulling the bar upward toward the chin, do not raise the bar higher than the point at which the elbow reaches shoulder level.

The following exercises are usually problem-free after shoulder labral repair:

1. Biceps curls
2. Cable rows and bent over rows
3. Shoulder shrugs

If your goal is to return to high-level weight training or weight lifting after surgery, it will typically take 3 to 6 months of cautious, gradual progression to return to top form. In general, you should start with very light weights and avoid increasing the amount of weight lifted by more than 10-15% (at a time) of your working weight every 10-14 days.

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