

## What Should I Expect After Rotator Cuff Surgery?

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Orthopedic

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Balance

### What Should I Expect After Rotator Cuff Surgery?

In the second iteration of our “What to Expect” series, we will discuss rotator cuff repairs. If you or a loved one is preparing for rotator cuff repair surgery, it’s normal to have a lot of questions about the road to recovery. We’re here to provide you with insights on what you can expect, from the day of surgery to the gradual return to your daily activities. Understanding the recovery journey can help set expectations and ensure a smoother, more comfortable experience.

### Recovery After a Rotator Cuff Surgery:

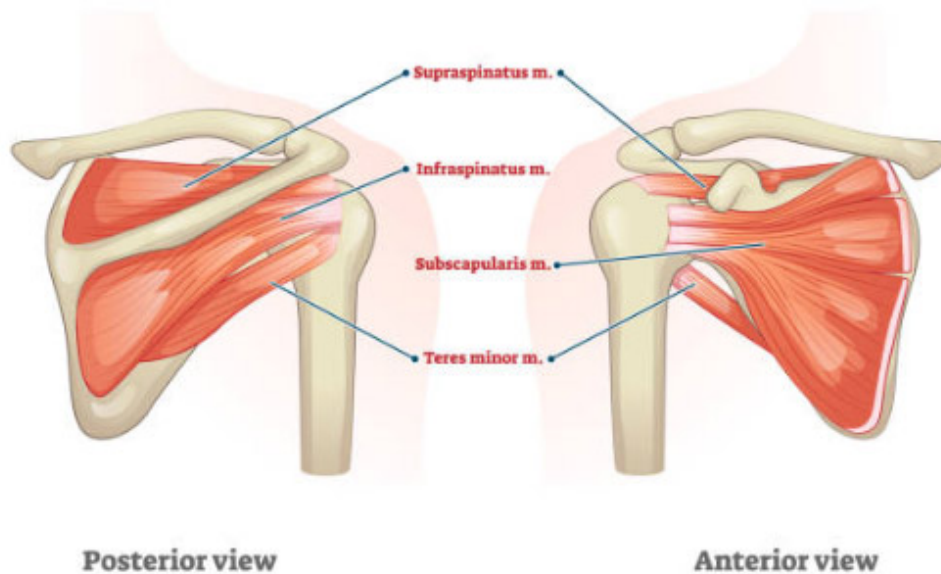
#### A Step-by-Step Guide

What is rotator cuff surgery?

The rotator cuff is a group of four muscles and tendons that facilitate shoulder movement and stabilize the ball and socket joint of the shoulder. Over time, one or more of these tendons can wear down or become injured, resulting in pain, strength impairments, and/or limited mobility. When conservative treatments don’t provide relief, surgery

may be necessary to repair the damaged tissue.

## ROTATOR CUFF MUSCLE



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### *The First 24 Hours After Surgery*

Immediately following surgery, the focus will be on allowing the shoulder to rest and heal. You can expect:

- **Immobilization:** A sling will be provided to keep your shoulder stable and minimize movement.
- **Pain Management:** Discomfort and pain are normal. Your surgeon will discuss pain management options with you to keep you comfortable, this can include medication and thermal modalities, such as ice.
- **Early Physical Therapy:** Although rest is essential, very gentle exercises to keep blood flowing and prevent stiffness will often begin in the first week or two.

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### *Starting Your Recovery: Weeks 1-6*

After a few weeks, physical therapy will play a more active role in your recovery:

- **What to Expect:** Typically, patients are released to begin outpatient physical therapy 3 to 6 weeks following surgery. The primary focus during this time is protecting the surgical site and

allowing the repair to heal. You will be utilizing a sling most hours of the day to protect your healing tissue. You will gradually phase out of the sling with the guidance of your surgeon and therapist. You will be limited during this time on how much you can use your shoulder outside of the sling.

- **Range of Motion (ROM):** The primary focus of therapy in the early phase of recovery will be restoring range of motion and preventing stiffness. At this stage, this will be done through gentle, passive stretching of the shoulder by your therapist and through easy self-stretching exercises.
- **Education:** We'll provide instructions on posture, shoulder positioning, and safe activity modifications to protect the repair.

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### ***The Meat and Potatoes: Weeks 6-12***

At this time most patients are released from the sling entirely and the focus shifts to therapy and restoring your shoulder function:

- **What to Expect:** You can expect a gradual increase in shoulder mobility through passive stretching, pulley assisted exercises, and self-stretching. In this phase, most patients are attending therapy two to three times per week. A home exercise program will be provided at this time and it is crucial to be consistent with a home program, along with therapy attendance, to achieve your desired outcome.
- **Resistance Exercises:** You will begin a progressive loading program at the guidance of your therapist to work on rotator cuff muscle activation, endurance, and strength. Heavy lifting or sustained overhead tasks are likely to still be challenging as you are developing strength.
- **Gradual Increase in Activity:** Our therapists will help you safely work towards your physical therapy goals and prior level of activity.

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### ***Long-Term Recovery: 3 Months and Beyond***

While in person rehabilitation typically lasts 3-6 months depending on your goals, full recovery can take up to a year, and every individual's journey is unique. Regular check-ins with your surgeon and physical therapist will help you stay on track.

- **What to Expect:** At this stage, full range of motion is typically restored and the primary focus is on higher level strength, stability, and endurance of the shoulder girdle. Many patients

have resumed most daily activities and are working to return to regular exercise or sport. You may still experience some soreness or fatigue in the surgical region with increased activity, however, this will continue to improve with time, smart choices, and consistent work.

- **Addressing Your Specific Goals:** If you have specific goals that you would like to return to, such as golfing or swimming, we can begin to tailor your physical therapy program towards those goals in this phase of care.

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## Tips for a Smooth Recovery

- **Stay Consistent:** Being consistent and following your physical therapist's guidance is key to regaining strength and mobility.
- **Avoid Overdoing It:** While it's tempting to push through pain, listen to your body to avoid setbacks to help make steady improvement.
- **Celebrate Progress:** Recovery is a journey, so acknowledge small victories along the way!

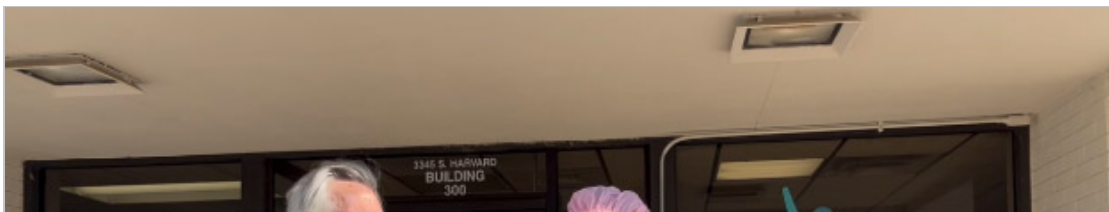
## We're Here to Help!

At LifeMotion, we're committed to helping you achieve the best outcome after a rotator cuff repair. Our expert doctors of physical therapy are here to provide personalized care and support throughout your recovery journey. If you have questions or want to schedule a consultation, call us at 918-574-2575, or [click here](#) to learn more.

### Physical Therapy Facts

Did you know you can use your FSA/HSA for physical therapy? If you have been putting off PT, utilize your unused FSA/HSA dollars and schedule your consultation here.

### Schedule an Appointment





## Clinic News:

October saw the 3rd annual LifeMotion Halloween Costume Contest! The winners were decided by vote on social media and in the clinic. Take a look at our contestants and make sure to follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)! Our winner were #7 and #8 in a tie! Here is The Pirate claiming his prize - check out the video on our socials!

## WATCH VIDEO







## Broken Arrow Christmas Parade

LifeMotion had a float in the Broken Arrow Christmas parade! We danced, sang, and handed out coasters with a balance challenge to assess your fall risk that you can try here.

**WATCH VIDEO**



## Annual LifeMotion Holiday Party

The annual LifeMotion holiday party was a hit! We had great evening

of laughs and fun stories including a successful cake flip by our own Dr. Lee.



### **A Message From Ryan**

Wow, can you believe January is already coming to a close? Time flies! All of us at LifeMotion hope you had a wonderful and relaxing holiday season filled with joy, family, and maybe a little fun (or a lot!).

We had quite the festive time here at the clinic, with everything from parades to staff parties—and yes, there were pies to the face! 🥧 In the midst of all the holiday cheer, we also made some exciting updates to our clinic:

✨ Expanded Pelvic Health Space: Our pelvic team has a brand-new treatment area, and the feedback has been amazing so far!

✨ New Equipment: We've added Total Gyms, pulleys, new treatment tables, and even the innovative NecksLevel neck strengthening device. All of this means a better, more effective experience for you during your care with us.

But that's not all! Thanks to your incredible support (and the trust of our wonderful referral partners in Tulsa and beyond), our team is growing! 🎉 We're thrilled to welcome FOUR new Doctors of Physical Therapy to the LifeMotion family. We can't wait for you to meet them — we'll be sharing their stories with you in the coming months.

Lastly, don't forget — you always have a choice when it comes to your physical therapy care after an injury or surgery. The LifeMotion team is here with one mission: to help you achieve amazing results and get back to doing what you love most.

So, whether it's time to start therapy or you're just stopping by to say hi, come see us! We can't wait to keep moving forward with you.

**Go to LifeMotion**





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