

# PROFESSIONAL THERAPIES, INC.

*Caring. Experience. Integrity. Results.*

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## Rotator Cuff Repair

### Definitions:

**Shoulder:** The shoulder is a ball-and-socket joint that allows a wide variety of motion. The rotator cuff muscles are a group of muscles and tendons that help control these movements and hold the shoulder joint in proper alignment.

**Rotator Cuff Repair:** The repair varies widely depending on the injury and the doctors preferences. Fragments of tendons, bursa (fluid sacs), and other debris can be removed during surgery (known as debridement). Another process of clearing room for the rotator cuff is by shaving/removing bone spurs. All of this is followed by the sewing of torn edges and, if needed, tacking down tendons.

### Signs/Symptoms:

The main complaint with a rotator cuff tear is shoulder pain. Pain is usually located over the top of the shoulder, sometimes with pain down the arm. Weakness of the arm and pain reaching overhead are common. Reaching, getting dressed and carrying objects also cause pain.

### Post Surgery:

Physical therapy should be initiated very soon after surgery. This is to regain the range of motion in a safe manner. This early return to range of motion helps prevent a condition called "frozen shoulder" where the injured shoulder is unable to move through the normal range of motion because of scar tissue formation and pain. Doctors may prescribe pain killers, muscle relaxors, and/or a sling (varies among different doctors) after surgery.

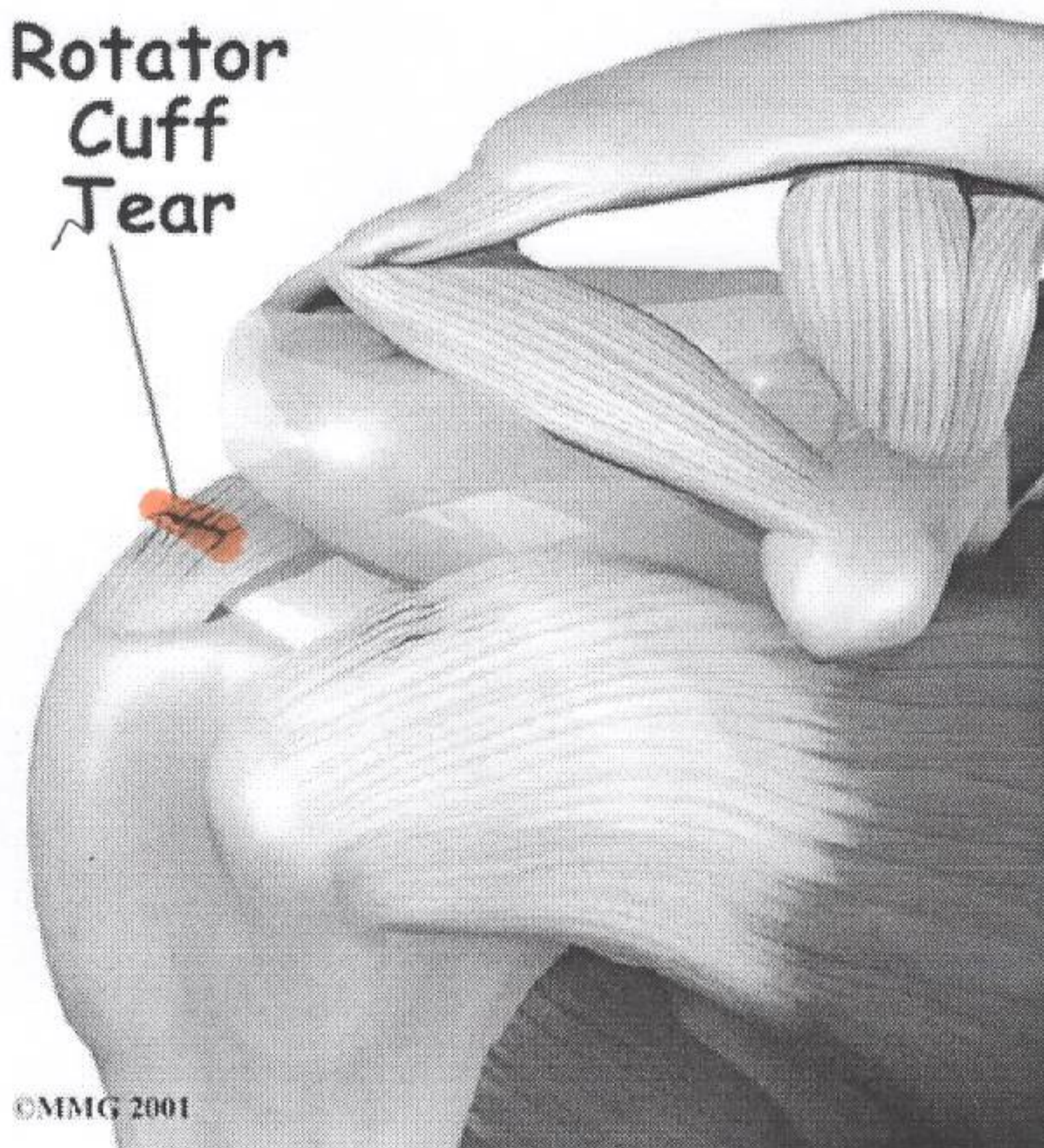
### Phases of Physical Therapy:

**Phase 1:** This typically lasts 7-8 weeks or until the doctor gives clearance for activity. This phase includes passive ROM where the PT safely moves the shoulder through the range of motion. Anti-inflammatory modalities are used in this stage as well (ice, electrical stimulation, etc).

**Phase 2:** This phase continues passive range of motion with the addition of active assisted range of motion (over head pulleys, bike, etc).

**Phase 3:** This phase involves the strengthening of the rotator cuff muscles. This is used to improve shoulder and scapular (shoulder blades) stability. The goal at the end of this phase is that the shoulder will be ready to return to normal activity. The timeline for this phase varies widely and is based on a number of factors.

**Rotator  
Cuff  
Tear**



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