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Adhesive Capsulitis Protocol

Non-operative Goals:
1. Assess and manage pain levels
2. Restore normal AC/SC and GH Joint ROM
3. Restore normal scapular mobility/function
4. Minimize myofascial restrictions
5. Pt independent with HEP
6. Patient education

Treatment:
1. Modalities to manage inflammation/pain
2. STM to Subscapularis, Pec Major/Minor, Lats, Teres Major, ant/lat Deltoid
3. Grade 1-4 mobilization to GH, scapulo-thoracic and AC/SC joint depending on stage or irritability of condition
4. PROM/AAROM/AROM exercises (Codman’s/pendulums, pulleys, table/wall slides, cane)
5. Cervical stretches (Levator, Traps, Scalene)
6. Pt education for postural alignment, pain management, HEP
7. Stretch the Rotator Cuff Interval (RCI): Supraspinatus, Subscapularis, Superior Glenohumeral and Coracohumeral ligaments

You must determine pt's level of tissue irritability to drive your treatment plan. Once determined, start at that stage and progress through the stages from there.

1. Low Irritability:
   a. Low pain (≤3/10)
   b. No resting or night pain
   c. Low disability on DASH, ASES, PSS, SPADI or SST
   d. Minimal pain at end ROM with overpressure
   e. AROM same as PROM

2. Moderate Irritability:
   a. Moderate pain (4-6/10)
   b. Intermittent night or resting pain
   c. Moderate disability on DASH, ASES, PSS, SPADI or SST
   d. Pain at end ROM
   e. AROM similar to PROM
3. High Irritability:
   a. High pain (≥7/10)
   b. Consistent night or resting pain
   c. High disability on DASH, ASES, PSS, SPADI or SST
   d. Pain prior to end ROM
   e. AROM < PROM secondary to pain

Stage 1. Pre-adhesive Stage
   -Generally low-moderate irritability with A/PROM
   -Modalities: heat/ice and E-Stim PRN
   -End range GH joint stretching all directions, 5-30s hold as tolerated
   -Grade I-IV GH mobilization with anterior, posterior, lateral and inferior glides at end range, long axis distraction to maximize ROM as tolerated
   -SC/AC mobs as appropriate
   -Low to high resistance strengthening/functional activity to tolerance
   -Low load short to prolonged stretching HEP with cane and pulley as tolerated
   -RTC and scapular static/dynamic stabilization Ther Ex: body blade, PNF with Theratube, rainbows, supermans as tolerated
   -Stretch the RCI: stretch into ER with shoulder adducted
   -STM to Subscapularis/Lats, Pec Major/Minor, Teres Minor, Infraspinatus, ant/lat Delt

Stage 2. Freezing (acute Adhesive) Stage
   -Generally high irritability with A/PROM
   -Modalities: heat/ice and ES
   -Stretch GH joint in pain free ROM for short durations, 1-5s hold as tolerated
   -Grade I-II GH and AC/SC joint mobilization, gentle long axis distraction as tolerated
   -PROM/AAROM Ther Ex: Codman’s/pendulums, cane, pulley, table slides as tolerated
   -Cervical stretches: traps, Levator Scap, and Scalenes
   -Scapular retraction, depression, reverse shoulder shrugs
   -Elbow and wrist AROM strengthening as tolerated

Stage 3. Frozen (Fibrotic) Stage
   -Generally low-moderate irritability with end ROM
   -Modalities: heat/ice and E-Stim PRN
   -Stretch GH joint and RCI in pain free ROM, 15-30s hold as tolerated
   -STM to Subscapularis/Lats, Pec Major/Minor, Teres Minor, Infraspinatus, ant/lat Delt
   -Grade II-IV GH and AC/SC joint mobilization, long axis distraction as tolerated
   -Scapular mobilization in all directions
   -Passive, AAROM/AROM Ther Ex: cane, pulley, table/wall slides, AAB, HBB with belt to tolerance
   -Low load prolonged stretch HEP with cane, pulley and belt to tolerance
   -Elbow flex/ext strengthening with Theraband and dumbbells as tolerated
   -Scapular strengthening/stabilization: t-band shoulder rows/ext, PNF patterns with manual resistance
Stage 4. Thawing Stage

- Generally low irritability with A/PROM
- STM to Subscapularis/Lats, Pec Major/Minor, Teres Minor, Infraspinatus, ant/lat Delt
- Stretch GH joint and RCI to end range and apply overpressure to tolerance, 30s hold
- Grade III-IV GH and AC/SC joint mobilization, long axis distraction
- Scapular mobilization in all directions
- Low load prolonged stretch HEP with cane, pulley and belt
- Passive, AAROM/AROM Ther Ex: cane, pulley, wall slides, AAB, HBB with belt, forward flexion and scaption
- Elbow flex/ext strengthening progressions
- Scapular strengthening/stabilization progressions
- Low to high resistance strengthening/functional activity to tolerance