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## **Rehabilitation Protocol**

### **Scapular Dyskinesia Physical Therapy Protocol**

#### **Phase 1: Acute Phase (Week 1-2)**

**Goals:** Reduce pain, improve posture, and initiate gentle activation of scapular stabilizers.

1. **Pain Management:**
  - **Rest/Activity Modification:** Avoid aggravating movements, particularly overhead activities, pushing/pulling, or lifting.
  - **Heat/Ice:** Use ice for 10-15 minutes if inflammation or swelling is present, or heat for 15-20 minutes to reduce muscle tightness.
2. **Posture Correction:**
  - **Postural Awareness Training:** Maintain neutral spine alignment, focusing on proper shoulder blade positioning. Use a mirror to ensure correct posture during activities.
  - **Chin Tucks:**
    - **How to perform:** Sit or stand, gently tuck the chin without flexing the neck forward.
    - **Reps:** 10-15 repetitions, 3-4 times/day.
3. **Scapular Retractions:**
  - **How to perform:** Gently squeeze the shoulder blades together without shrugging. Hold for 3-5 seconds.
  - **Reps:** 10-15 repetitions, 3-4 times/day.
4. **Gentle Range of Motion (ROM) Exercises:**
  - **Pendulum Swings:**
    - **How to perform:** Lean forward and let the arm hang down, gently swing the arm in small circles or side-to-side.
    - **Duration:** 1-2 minutes, 2-3 times/day.
  - **Wall Walks:**
    - **How to perform:** Gently slide your hand up a wall, stopping if pain or discomfort increases.
    - **Reps:** 10-12 repetitions, 2 times/day.

#### **Phase 2: Subacute Phase (Week 3-6)**

**Goals:** Increase range of motion, activate key muscles (serratus anterior, lower trapezius), and strengthen scapular stabilizers.

1. **Scapular Control and Stability:**
  - **Scapular Clock:**
    - **How to perform:** Visualize a clock on the scapula, and perform gentle motions mimicking the hour positions (12, 3, 6, 9).

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- **Reps:** 2 sets of 10-15 repetitions.
- 2. **Serratus Anterior Activation:**
  - **Wall Slides with Serratus Punch:**
    - **How to perform:** Stand with your forearms against the wall, slide them upward while pushing through your shoulder blades (protraction).
    - **Reps:** 10-15 repetitions, 2 sets.
- 3. **Strengthening the Lower Trapezius:**
  - **Prone Y's:**
    - **How to perform:** Lie face down with arms extended in a "Y" position. Raise arms slightly off the ground while squeezing the shoulder blades downward.
    - **Reps:** 10-12 repetitions, 2 sets.
- 4. **Resisted Scapular Retractions:**
  - **How to perform:** Using a resistance band, pull back with both arms while squeezing the shoulder blades together.
  - **Reps:** 2 sets of 12-15 repetitions.
- 5. **Stretching:**
  - **Pectoralis Minor Stretch:**
    - **How to perform:** Stand in a doorway, place your arm at a 90-degree angle, and gently lean forward to stretch the front of the shoulder.
    - **Hold:** 20-30 seconds, 3-5 repetitions.

### Phase 3: Strengthening and Coordination Phase (Week 6-10)

**Goals:** Improve strength, coordination, and endurance of the scapular stabilizers.

1. **Progress Scapular Stability Exercises:**
  - **Dynamic Hug:**
    - **How to perform:** With a resistance band around your back and held in both hands, push your arms forward in a hugging motion while engaging the serratus anterior.
    - **Reps:** 2-3 sets of 10-15 repetitions.
2. **Closed Kinetic Chain (CKC) Exercises:**
  - **Push-up Plus:**
    - **How to perform:** Perform a standard push-up, but at the top of the movement, push further to fully protract the shoulder blades (serratus anterior activation).
    - **Reps:** 2 sets of 8-10 repetitions.
  - **Scapular Wall Push-ups:**
    - **How to perform:** Stand facing a wall with your hands at shoulder height, perform a push-up by focusing on moving the shoulder blades as you push away from the wall.
    - **Reps:** 2 sets of 12-15 repetitions.
3. **Advanced Strengthening:**
  - **External Rotation with Resistance Band:**

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- **How to perform:** Attach a resistance band to a stable object at elbow height, keep your elbow close to your side, and rotate your arm outward.
  - **Reps:** 2 sets of 10-15 repetitions per side.
4. **Scapular Depression Exercises:**
- **Lat Pull-downs (using a band):**
    - **How to perform:** Perform a pull-down motion using a resistance band, focusing on pulling your shoulder blades down toward your back pockets.
    - **Reps:** 2-3 sets of 10-12 repetitions.

### Phase 4: Return to Full Activity (Week 10-12 and Beyond)

**Goals:** Restore functional movement patterns, prevent recurrence, and optimize scapular strength and mobility.

1. **Functional Strength Training:**
  - **Overhead Activities:** Progress into overhead movements, ensuring proper scapular mechanics during each motion (e.g., shoulder presses or overhead reaches).
  - **Reps:** 2-3 sets of 8-10 repetitions.
2. **Sport/Occupation-Specific Exercises:**
  - Tailor activities based on specific functional needs (e.g., overhead athletes, manual laborers, etc.).
3. **Maintenance Exercises:**
  - Continue scapular stability exercises 2-3 times per week to prevent recurrence and ensure proper movement patterns.
4. **Core Strengthening:**
  - Incorporate core stability exercises such as planks and side planks to improve overall body mechanics and reduce compensatory movements.

### Important Considerations:

- **Avoid Compensatory Movements:** Ensure proper shoulder mechanics during all exercises. Watch for compensations like excessive upper trapezius activation or shoulder shrugging.
- **Progress Gradually:** Begin with lower resistance and range of motion, increasing intensity and complexity as tolerated.
- **Monitor Pain:** If pain increases during exercise, reduce intensity or pause the activity.