

Functional Progression for Divers Following Rest From Diving or After Shoulder Surgery

The following are general guidelines for return to diving. Obviously every athlete, coach, medical condition, and surgery is different, and so the progression should be done in the context of these variables.

General Guidelines

It is normal to have soreness during the progression. The signal to rest, decrease workouts, or back off is that soreness the day after the workout is enough to compromise the next workout. Progress only if there is not enough soreness to affect the next workout.

The diver who has undergone shoulder surgery, should be assessed by a physical therapist or certified athletic trainer to be sure that they have full range of motion (in all planes), and are capable of getting their arms and hands in position to “grab” and “lock out” with no pain and normal scapular (shoulder blade) motions before returning to diving.

When the diver is capable of this, they can start to do dry land workouts in a belt and foot first entries on 1M so that they're board work foundation is reestablished. It is very important that body and arm mechanics, including arm swing, on the board are reestablished prior to starting diving. Good approach, hurdle and press mechanics must be normalized for each individual dive. If this does not occur, the chance of getting reinjured increases because more adjustments will be required on entry, which increases the stress on the repaired structures. Once the board work is technically OK then start required dives on 1M and work up to requireds on 3M as long as there are no setbacks, pain and mechanics remain good. From there go to 1M optionals and then 3M optionals.

Divers should be able to do a handstand push up before head first entries are allowed. They need to be evaluated after practice to make sure they are not getting more sore and ROM remains normal. Watch for fatigue which will manifest itself as poor shoulder mechanics, inability to hold entries, etc. Icing after practice is mandatory.

1. Progression is as follows:
 - Dry land work in belt (attention to spotting is critical)
 - Feet first entries
 - Required dives before optionals (backs and gainers last)
 - 1 M then 3M then 5M then 7M then 10M
 - Rest the day after every second day on springboard
 - Rest every other day between tower workouts
2. Dry land board work
 - 3 reps of each required dive x 2 days
 - 3 reps of each optional dive x 2 days
3. Required Dives
 - 1 meter - 3 reps of each required dive x 2 days
 - 3 meter - 3 reps of each required dive x 2 days
 - REST
4. Optional Dives
 - 1 meter - 3 reps of each optional dive x 2 days
 - 3 meter - 3 reps of each optional dive x 2 days
 - REST
5. 5M, 7.5M, 10M required dives
 - Line-ups precede required dives and must be performed with proper technique
 - 3 reps of each required dive at 5 meters*
 - REST
 - 3 reps of each required dive at 7.5 meters*
 - REST
 - 3 reps of each required dive at 10 meters
 - REST
6. 5M, 7.5M, 10M optional dives
 - Line-ups precede required dives and must be performed with proper technique
 - 3 reps of each optional dive at 5 meters*
 - REST
 - 3 reps of each optional dive at 7.5 meters*
 - REST
 - 3 reps of each optional dive at 10 meters
 - REST

* Appropriate lead ups for take-offs and line-ups should be done at the 5 & 7.5 meter levels