

Rib Injuries

Diagnosis Explanation:

Rib injuries can include **rib fractures, bruised ribs, or rib muscle strains**, commonly caused by **falls, direct impact, sports injuries, or excessive coughing**. Symptoms include **sharp pain with breathing, coughing, sneezing, or movement**, tenderness over the ribs, and sometimes **bruising or swelling**. Rib fractures typically heal in **6-8 weeks**, while bruised ribs and muscle strains may resolve within **3-4 weeks**.

Specific Work Modifications:

- **If your job requires standing or walking:** Maintain **upright posture**, take **breaks to rest**, and avoid twisting motions.
- **If your job involves lifting:** Avoid **lifting heavy objects**, bending at the waist, or sudden reaching movements.
- **If your job is desk-based:** Sit with **good posture**, avoid **slouching**, and use **lumbar support** if needed.
- **Avoid:** Heavy lifting, excessive reaching, twisting, and deep breathing exercises that worsen pain.

Specific Activity Modifications:

- **If you run or play sports:** Avoid **contact sports and high-impact activities** until pain subsides.
- **If you do yoga or Pilates:** Modify movements to **avoid deep stretching or twisting of the torso**.
- **If you do weightlifting:** Avoid **heavy lifting, overhead presses, and core exercises** like crunches.
- **Avoid:** Running, jumping, rowing, and activities that cause pain with breathing or movement.

Recommended Supplements:

- **Calcium & Vitamin D** - 1000mg/800 IU daily to support bone healing.
- **Magnesium** - 300-400mg daily to relax muscles and prevent spasms.
- **Collagen Peptides** - 10g daily for soft tissue and cartilage repair.
- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids** - 1000mg daily to reduce inflammation.
- **Turmeric (Curcumin)** - 500-1000mg daily for pain relief.

Recommended Nutrition and Hydration:

- **Increase Protein Intake** (chicken, fish, eggs, tofu) to support tissue healing.
- **Eat Anti-Inflammatory Foods** (berries, leafy greens, turmeric, nuts) to reduce swelling.

- **Consume Hydrating Foods** (cucumber, watermelon, citrus) to maintain muscle and tissue elasticity.
- **Limit Processed Foods & Sugars** to prevent inflammation.
- **Hydration:** Drink **8-10 cups of water daily** to keep tissues hydrated and promote healing.

Home Exercise Prescription (Rehabilitation for Rib Injuries)

Early Phase (0-2 Weeks, Reducing Pain & Protecting the Injury):

- **Deep Breathing Exercises** - Take slow, deep breaths **in through the nose, out through the mouth, 10 breaths, 3x/day** to prevent lung complications.
- **Gentle Side Bends (Pain-Free Range)** - Lean slightly to one side, **hold 10 seconds**, repeat **5 reps each side, 2x/day**.
- **Scapular Retractions** - Pull shoulder blades together, **hold 5 seconds, repeat 10 reps, 2x/day** to prevent stiffness.

Strengthening Phase (2-6 Weeks, Restoring Mobility & Strength):

- **Thoracic Extension Stretch (Using a Chair)** - Sit, place hands behind head, gently arch back, **hold 10 seconds, repeat 3x/day**.
- **Wall Angels** - Stand against a wall, slowly raise arms up and down, **10 reps, 2x/day** to improve upper body mobility.
- **Seated Rows (Resistance Band)** - Pull band toward chest while keeping back straight, **10 reps, 2x/day**.

Advanced Phase (6+ Weeks, Preventing Recurrence & Returning to Activity):

- **Core Stability Exercises (Modified Planks, Dead Bugs)** - Hold **10-20 seconds**, increase gradually.
- **Resistance Band Shoulder Press (Light Resistance)** - Press upward without excessive rib movement, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Stationary Cycling or Walking** - **15-20 minutes/day** to maintain endurance without impact.

Helpful Books:

1. *The Sports Medicine Bible: Prevent, Diagnose, and Treat Your Injuries* - Lyle J. Micheli, MD.
2. *Peak: The New Science of Athletic Performance That Is Revolutionizing Sports* - Marc Bubbs, ND.

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Contact a Key West orthopedic clinic or reach out to Dr. Jason Pirozzolo.