
Arthroscopic Cuff Repair

Setup and Fundamentals

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Rotator cuff tears are debilitating injuries that affect patients' ability to perform activities of daily living in a pain-free environment. Historically, these injuries were repaired with open approaches that resulted in generally satisfactory outcomes; however, with advances in digital optical technology, arthroscopic rotator cuff repair has gained significant popularity and prominence over the traditional methods of open and mini-open cuff repair.

ADVANTAGES

The most significant advantage of arthroscopic rotator cuff repair is the minimal incision required for the repair, which leaves a smaller, less unsightly scar behind for the patient. In addition, a smaller incision causes less deltoid disruption, leading to less associated bleeding risk and less postoperative inflammation. In fact, proinflammatory interleukin 6 levels have been shown to be noticeably lower in arthroscopic repair when compared with those in open repair.¹ Spatial limitations commonly associated with open and mini-open approaches are also reduced with the arthroscopic approach. This type of repair allows the surgeon to approach tears from multiple different directions percutaneously, not solely depending on the portal used, allowing for a variety of perspectives of the concerning pathology. In particular, the view of the medial aspect of the sub-acromial space is significantly improved in the arthroscopic approach, and thus facilitates repair of retracted tears.

DISADVANTAGES

The primary disadvantages of the arthroscopic approach are that it is technically more demanding than the open or mini-open approach and requires a steeper learning curve. Additionally,