



DISTAL BICEP TENDON REPAIR POST-OP PROTOCOL

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Patient Name:
Date of Surgery:

Phase I - Weeks 0-1

Initial Postoperative Immobilization:

Posterior splint, elbow immobilization at 90 degrees for 5-7 days with forearm in neutral (Unless otherwise indicated by surgeon)

Hinged Elbow Brace

Elbow placed in a hinged ROM brace at 5-7 days postoperative. Brace set unlocked at 45 degrees to full flexion.

Gradually increase elbow ROM in brace as specific per week

Strengthening Program

Week 1 – Sub-maximal pain free isometrics for triceps and shoulder musculature.

Phase II - Weeks 2-3

Hinged Brace Range of Motion

Week 2 – 45 degrees to full elbow flexion

Week 3 – 45 degrees to full elbow flexion

Exercises

Passive ROM for elbow flexion and supination (with elbow at 90 degrees)

Assisted ROM for elbow extension and pronation (with elbow at 90 degrees)

Shoulder ROM as needed based on evaluation, avoiding excessive extension.

Strengthening Program

Week 2 – Submaximal pain free biceps isometrics with forearm in neutral.

Phase III - Weeks 3-4

Hinged Brace Range of Motion

Week 3 – 45 degrees to full elbow flexion

Week 4 – 30 degrees to full elbow flexion

Exercises

Initiate active-assisted ROM elbow flexion

Continue assisted extension and progress to passive extension ROM

Strengthening Program

Weeks 3-4 – Single plane active ROM elbow flexion, extension, supination, and pronation

Phase IV - Weeks 4-5

Hinged Brace Range of Motion

Week 4 – 30 degrees to full elbow flexion

Week 5 – 20 degrees to full elbow flexion

Exercises

Active ROM elbow flexion and extension

Phase V - Weeks 6-8

Hinged Brace Range of Motion

Week 6 – 10 degrees to full elbow flexion

Week 8 – Full ROM of elbow; discontinue brace if adequate motor control

Exercises

Continue program as above

May begin combined/composite motions (i.e. extension with pronation)

If at 8 weeks post-op the patient has significant ROM deficits therapist may consider more aggressive management, after consultation with referring surgeon, to regain ROM.

Strengthening Program

Week 8 – Progressive resisted exercise program is initiated for elbow flexion, extension, supination, and pronation.

Phase VI - Weeks 12-14

Strengthening Program

Weeks 12-14 – May initiate light upper extremity weight training.

Non-athletes initiate endurance program that stimulates desired work activities/requirements