

ELBOW

Distal Biceps Tendon Repair

Surgery Date: _____

Progressions are time and criterion-based, dependent on soft tissue healing, patient demographics and clinician evaluation. A review of the operative note and communication of any concerns with the referring physician is encouraged. Use of allowed visits should consider overall insurance limitations. When limitations are present, spread visits out over time to ensure that the patient can optimally complete rehab program with return to appropriate activities.

Weeks 0 – 2: Period of Protection | No Formal PT

Splint/Brace

- Posterior splint at 90° elbow flexion, forearm neutral to slight supination

Range of Motion

- NO elbow ROM. Wrist and hand ROM as tolerated

Exercise

- Grip strengthening only

Phase I (Weeks 2 – 6): Early ROM & Protect Repair

Brace

- Hinged elbow brace with progressive extension
 - Week 2: elbow extension to 30° (with forearm pronated)
 - Week 3: elbow extension to 20° (with forearm pronated)
 - Week 4: elbow extension to 10° (with forearm pronated)
 - Week 5–6: elbow extension to 0° (with forearm pronated)

Range of Motion

- PROM/AAROM elbow flexion/extension within brace limits
- Begin gentle forearm supination/pronation as tolerated
- Full wrist and hand ROM

Exercise

- Grip strengthening
- Wrist flexion/extension exercises
- Shoulder ROM as tolerated
- No resisted elbow flexion or forearm supination

Precautions

- No resisted elbow flexion for 6 weeks
- No resisted forearm supination for 6 weeks
- No lifting > 1 lb with affected arm

Phase II (Weeks 6 – 12)

Brace

- Discontinue brace

Range of Motion

- Full AROM elbow, forearm, wrist

Exercise

- Begin isometric then light isotonic elbow flexion
- Begin isometric then light isotonic forearm supination/pronation
- Progress grip strengthening
- Light resistance bands

Precautions

- No heavy lifting (> 5 lbs) until 10–12 weeks

Phase III (Weeks 12+): Return to Activity

Exercise

- Advance strengthening as tolerated
- Progressive resistance exercises for biceps, forearm
- Eccentric exercises
- Sport/work specific functional training

Return to Activity

- Return to light duty work at 3 months
- Return to heavy labor at 4–6 months
- Return to sports at 4–6 months with physician clearance