

ELBOW

Elbow "Terrible Triad" Rehabilitation Protocol

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.

Phase I (0–6 Weeks): Period of Protection

In general, splint/brace should be worn at all times during this phase (physician will define stable arc of motion).

Weeks 0–1: No Formal PT

- Posterior splint in 90° flexion
- Wrist and hand ROM only
- Gentle grip strengthening

Weeks 1–6: Begin Formal PT (2–3x/wk)

- PROM/AAROM elbow flexion/extension within stable arc
- PROM/AAROM forearm supination/pronation as tolerated
- Shoulder AROM as tolerated
 - Gravity-assisted extension stretching (prone or supine)
 - Avoid valgus stress
 - No resisted elbow flexion or forearm supination for 6 weeks
 - Low-load, long-duration stretching for extension if stiff

Modalities

- Per therapist, including heat (before), ice (after)

Phase II (6–12 Weeks): Advance Active Motion / Strengthening

Brace

- Continued but fully unlocked. Wean as tolerated

Range of Motion

- Full AROM elbow flexion/extension
- Full AROM forearm supination/pronation
- Progressive stretching for any persistent ROM deficits

Exercise

- Begin isometric strengthening for elbow flexors/extensors
- Begin isometric forearm supination/pronation
- Progress to isotonic exercises with light resistance
- Grip strengthening progression
- Scapular stabilization exercises

Precautions

- No valgus stress
- No heavy lifting

Phase III (3–12 Months): Sport/Occupation-Specific Rehab

Exercise

- Advance strengthening as tolerated
- Progressive resistance exercises
- Eccentric strengthening
- Sport/work specific functional training
- Plyometric exercises (when appropriate)

Return to Activity

- Return to full activities based on ROM, strength, and function
- Contact sports require physician clearance
- Overhead sports: 6+ months with adequate strength and ROM