

ELBOW

Radial Head Replacement

Surgery Date: _____

This stand-alone plan applies to an isolated radial-head replacement where the elbow is stable enough for early protected motion. If the replacement is part of a terrible-triad injury or another complex reconstruction, the surgeon-selected plan for the entire injury governs. Use only the protocol identified by your surgical team.

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 (Weeks 0 – 6): Early ROM & Protect Repair

Splint/Brace

- Posterior splint for comfort, remove for exercises
- Sling for comfort when not exercising

Range of Motion

- Begin AROM elbow flexion/extension immediately as tolerated
- Begin AROM forearm supination/pronation immediately as tolerated
- Full wrist and hand ROM
- Shoulder ROM as tolerated

Exercise

- Grip strengthening
- Wrist flexion/extension exercises
- No resisted elbow flexion/extension for 6 weeks
- No resisted forearm supination/pronation for 6 weeks

Precautions

- No valgus stress to elbow
- No lifting > 1 lb with affected arm for 6 weeks

Phase II (Weeks 6 – 12)

Brace

- Discontinue splint/sling

Range of Motion

- Full AROM elbow, forearm, wrist

Exercise

- Begin isometric then light isotonic strengthening
- Progress grip strengthening
- Light resistance bands
- Begin closed chain upper extremity exercises

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
- Sport/work specific functional training

Return to Activity

- Return to full activities as strength and ROM allow
- Contact sports require physician clearance