



Curtis Bush, MD
817-878-5300

Postoperative Distal Biceps Tendon Repair Rehabilitation Protocol

ACUTE REPAIR

PHASE I: 1-3 WEEKS

- For the first post op week, the patient is in a posterior splint. Remove the splint on post op day 7
- Apply soft dressing to the elbow after splint is removed

Clinical Goals

- Elbow ROM from 0 degrees of extension to 130 degrees of flexion, gentle extension
- Maintain minimal swelling and soft tissue healing
- Achieve full forearm supination and pronation

Testing

- Bilateral elbow and forearm ROM

Exercises

- Begin passive flexion and active extension. No resisted elbow flexion for 10 weeks.
- Patient should perform **passive** ROM exercises from 0 degrees of extension to 130 degrees of flexion 5-6 times per day for 25 repetitions.
- Apply ice after exercise sessions.
- ROM exercises are encouraged.
- No resisted elbow flexion for 10 weeks

PHASE II: 3-6 WEEKS

Clinical Goals

- Full elbow and forearm ROM by 6 weeks.
- Scar management.
- No resisted elbow flexion for 10 weeks.

Testing

- Bilateral elbow and forearm ROM
- Grip strengthening at 4-6 weeks

Exercises

- Week 3
 - Scar massage 3-4 times per day.
 - Active wrist flexion / extension.
 - Active ROM of hand in neutral position.
 - Supination / pronation through pain-free range.

- Week 4
 - Continue same exercises.
 - Putty may be used 3 times per day to improve grip strength.
 - Ladder with arm supported by unaffected extremity.
 - Gentle pulley while limiting elbow extension to -10 degrees.
- Week 5
 - Supine scapula stabilization with **no weight**.
 - Alphabet door / clockwise / counterclockwise circles with ball.
- Week 6
 - Passive elbow extension exercises may be started if needed.
 - Light strengthening exercises are started with light tubing or 1-kg weights for elbow flexion, extension, forearm rotation and wrist flexion and extension.
 - Shoulder Theraband strengthening exercises are started.
 - Supine scapula stabilization with 1kg weight.
 - Ball toss / trampoline chest pass 1kg weight.
 - Ice after strengthening exercises.

PHASE III: 8-14 weeks

- Progressive resisted exercise program is initiated for elbow flexion, extension, supination, and pronation.
- Progress shoulder strengthening program
 - Weeks 12-14: May initiate light upper extremity weight training.
 - Non-athletes initiate endurance program that simulates desired work activities/requirements.