

## Distal Bicep Repair Protocol

### Goals

- Maintain shoulder ROM while immobilized during early phase of healing
- During recovery, pulling and lifting with the arm should be avoided until 4 month post operatively
- Minimal to no pain during or after exercises, although fatigue is OK
- **No passive ROM (PROM) unless specifically indicated by the physician**

### Modalities:

- Ice following exercises
- No phonophoresis/iontophoresis
- No ultrasound
- Transfrictional massage for tendonitis (only if indicated by physician)

### Phase I: 0-2 weeks after surgery (1 visit)

- I Patient is to wear a hinged elbow brace locked at 90 degrees at all times – remove for hygiene only
  
- II Range of Motion (ROM)
  - No passive range of motion (PROM) of elbow, except passive motion / spinatous
  - No active flexion of elbow
  - Gentle hand and wrist motion as tolerated
  - Active shoulder ROM (AROM)
  - Codman's (pendulum) exercise
  - Shoulder isometrics – submaximal exertion
  
- III Goal: Prevent shoulder and wrist stiffness while immobilized during the early phase of healing of the repair

### Phase II: Weeks 2-6 (1-2 visits)

- I Active elbow extension permitted to 90 to 60 degrees in brace – brace may be removed for hygiene and PT only. May unlock brace by 15 degrees of extension each week. For example, week 3 is 90-60, week 4 is 90-45 degrees.
  
- II
  - No active flexion of elbow
  - Passive extension within limits of brace

III Strengthening/ROM

- AAROM (wand exercises) – **pain-free only**
- Shoulder strengthening exercises

IV Goal: Begin slight, controlled elbow movement in brace to the determined limits with concern not to push too aggressively during the healing phase of the repair. Maintain shoulder ROM.

**Phase III: Weeks 7-8 (1-2 visits)**

I Discontinue brace

II Gradually progress AROM until full ROM (0-130 degrees) achieved

- All motion should be pain free
- No passive stretching

III Continue strengthening/ROM of shoulder

- Shoulder strengthening exercises
- Scapular stabilization exercises

IV Goal: Pain free full ROM of elbow

**Phase IV: Weeks 9-16 ( 3-5 visits)**

I Begin gentle pain free resistance exercises for elbow, forearm and wrist

- Initially start off with isometrics and then progress to high rep, low weight free weights
- More aggressive strengthening at 3 month post op
- Shoulder strengthening exercises
- Scapular stabilization exercises

II Begin task-specific functional training at 3 months post op

- Continue to avoid excessive repetitive activities and all heavy lifting

III Goals: Increase to sport or activities without restrictions

**Phase IV: (4-6 months)**

IV Return to sport or activities without restriction. Avoid dead lift or pullups until 6 months

This protocol provides you with general guidelines for the rehabilitation of patients following a distal biceps repair or reconstruction. Specific changes in the program will be made by the physician as appropriate for an individual patient. If you have questions regarding the progress of the patient, the physician should be contacted.