**Elbow Arthroscopy**

**Osteochondritis dissecans**

Patient and Physiotherapist information

**Procedure details:** Elbow arthroscopy is the surgical procedure of instrumenting and visualising the elbow articular surface. This is performed for removal of loose bodies (cartilage fragments), treatment of cartilage or bone defects, removal of arthritic spurs or releasing joint capsule or tendons, treating infection and for diagnostic purposes.

**Goals of treatment:** The aim changes with the pathology in question. The common goal is restore the elbow range of motion and improve pain. Following elbow arthroscopy a guided return to range of motion should be attempted.

For osteochondritis dissecans, the goal is to restore normal bony architecture and support to the overlying cartilage. If the cartilage damaged, it may be removed, if the bone requires increased blood supply this is done via drilling the bone.

**Rehabilitation phases:**

This document can be used with Dr Drynan’s rehabilitation videos, accessed via [www.drdaviddrynan.com.au](http://www.drdaviddrynan.com.au) or Youtube – Dr Drynan Orthopaedics or Link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbig6cNvW11u42tIYHvGl7w>

**Phase**

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| **Phase** | **Time (days)** | **Restrictions** | **Exercises** |
| 1 | 0-5-7 | In a cast bulky bandage until next visit – usually a week or less. | Finger movement in cast/splint is encouraged. Active thumb and all finger movement. If in a bandage – then movement is encouraged. Can change to a tubigrip compression at day 5-7. |
| 2 | 5/7-35 | No wrist strengthening  No lifting more than cup of tea/glass of water  No Sport | Active and active assisted ROM Full Flexion and extension  Finger and wrist ROM, including fist, passive assistance with end range.  Passive end range of motion exercises  AIM full ROM by week 3-4  \*\*OK for office/school work from week 2  \*\*If the cartilage lesion has been removed – then return to normal duties as able from 4 weeks. |
| 3 | 35 days-3 months | No boxing or heavy weights. | Full ROM, PROM, AROM, AAROM  Begin muscle strengthening  Wrist strengthening and forearm pronator strengthening.  Can start with push-ups at 8 week mark  Swimming from 6 weeks – in pool – take it easy |
| 4 | 5-6 months | Slowly return to sport orientated | Return to sport program, but no sport yet, training, gradual, stopping if pain, swelling, instability or concerns  Likely return for MRI of affected elbow around 6 months if the OCD has been repaired. |

\*\* Talk to Dr Drynan regarding ligament injuries, associated with your injury that may preclude this form of rehab or have certain restrictions