

Postoperative Rehabilitation Protocol for Distal Triceps Repair

**Physical Therapy should be started after your 2 week postoperative visit*

PHASE 1: PROTECTED (0-2 WEEKS AFTER SURGERY)

- Precautions
 - No active elbow ROM. Keep splint clean and dry.
 - No weight bearing through surgical extremity for 12 weeks
- Exercises
 - Wrist, hand, and finger ROM

PHASE II: PROM and AROM (2-6 WEEKS AFTER SURGERY)

- Precautions
 - No soft tissue mobilization or cross friction massage directly on scar for 6 weeks
 - No active elbow extension for 6 weeks
 - Vaso and E-stim for pain and edema control
 - Able to progress elbow flexion 15 degrees every 5 days
- Weeks 2-4
 - No shoulder flexion > 90 degrees for 4 weeks
 - Do not push elbow flexion ROM until 6 weeks
 - PROM-AAROM within limits at shoulder and elbow
 - Gentle soft tissue mobilization (not on the surgical scar) for improved blood flow and reduced edema
- Weeks 4-6
 - Initiate shoulder submaximal isometrics (start at 25-50% effort, pain-free) – except shoulder extension
 - Progress shoulder AAROM-AROM

PHASE III: INITIATION OF ELBOW AROM AND STRENGTH

- Precautions
 - No pain or reactive edema with initiation of active elbow extension
 - Avoid resisted elbow extension and shoulder extensions/rows for 12 weeks
- Weeks 6-8
 - Continue progressing AROM of shoulder. Increase muscle endurance with high reps, low resistance
 - Initiate active, concentric elbow extension (no resistance) in pain-free range
 - No eccentric triceps activity (use contralateral arm to aid in eccentric phase of triceps activity)
 - Isotonic IR and ER light resistance movement (at neutral)
 - Supine ABC and SA punches with high reps, low resistance
 - Gentle soft tissue mobilization (light scar massage if hypomobile)
- Weeks 8-12
 - Initiate prone scapular series

- Initiate light, sub-maximal triceps isometrics (25-50% effort, pain free)
- Allow for eccentric triceps activity if pain free (no resistance)
- Gradual progression of biceps strengthening
- Resisted IR and ER at 30 degrees ABD progressing to 90 degrees abduction
- Resisted SA punch & bear hugs, standing
- Rhythmic stabilization for shoulder (supine progressing to various positions)
- No pressive activity or resisted triceps isotonic (triceps kickback, bench press, overhead press) for 12 weeks
- *Okay for stationary bike and light jogging at week 10*

PHASE IV: RETURN TO SPORT/RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY (12-16 WEEKS POST OP)

- Rehabilitation Goals
 - Maintain full, non-painful AROM
 - Progress isotonic strengthening of triceps
 - Introduce light pressing activity
 - Return to sports progression: throwing / swimming / lifting
- Exercises:
 - Progress triceps strengthening (concentric) with light resistance
 - CKC UE weight bearing (start with 25%, wide hand position, 0-10 degrees of elbow flexion to limit stress on triceps): wall weight shifts, quadruped rocking
 - Gentle short duration UBE (2-3 min initially, progressing as pain allows)
 - Introduce pushup progression (limit amount of elbow flexion to 45 degrees initially) and week 14
 - Initiate plyometric training below shoulder height with progressing to overhead: begin with both arms and progress to a single arm (16 weeks)
 - PNF/Diagonal pattern strengthening
- Criteria to return to sports
 - Full triceps strength
 - Pain free stability and control
 - Proper kinematics