



INOVA[®]

Sports Medicine

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Physical Therapy Protocol Following Distal Triceps Repair

Post-Op Weeks 0-2:

Initial Post-operative Immobilization:

- The patient is maintained in a posterior arm splint with elbow immobilization at 90 degrees, forearm is in neutral position until the first post-op visit (2 weeks after surgery).

Hinged Elbow Brace:

- An unlocked hinged ROM elbow brace set at 90 degrees of flexion and full extension is applied during the first post-op visit. This brace will be worn for the next six weeks.

Clinical Goals:

- Maintain minimal swelling and soft tissue healing
- Elbow ROM from full extension to 90 degrees of flexion increase as directed below.
- Achieve full forearm supination and pronation

Post-Op Weeks 3-8

Goals:

1. Tolerate increases in elbow flexion
2. Achieve gradual restoration of AROM

Exercises:

1. **Assisted** ROM for elbow flexion and supination (with elbow in full extension)
 - Week 3 - Full extension to 45 degrees of flexion**
 - Week 4 - Full extension to 60 degrees of flexion**
 - Week 5 – Full extension to 80 degrees of flexion**
 - Week 6 – Full extension to 90 degrees of flexion**
 - Week 7 – Full extension to 115 degrees of flexion**
 - Week 8 – Full extension to 125 degrees of flexion**
2. **Passive** ROM for elbow extension and pronation (with elbow in full extension)
3. Shoulder ROM as needed based on evaluation avoiding excessive flexion.
4. Ice after exercise

Exercises (Week 5):

1. Active flexion limit changed to 60 degrees. Passive extension may be increased to full extension as tolerated. The brace stays on at all times except when bathing or exercising.
2. Active wrist flexion/extension
3. Active ROM of hand in neutral position
4. Supination/pronation through pain-free range

Exercises (Week 6):

1. Active flexion limit changed to 80 degrees
2. Continue same exercises
3. Putty may be used to 3 times per day to improve grip strength
4. Ladder with arm supported by unaffected extremity
5. Gentle pulley while limiting elbow flexion to -90 degrees

Exercises (Week 7):

1. Active flexion limit changed to 90 degrees.
2. Supine scapula stabilization with no weight
3. Biceps specific exercises

Exercises (Week 8):

1. Active flexion limit changed to 115 degrees.
2. At the end of 8 weeks and after evaluation by the physician the brace may be discontinued
3. Passive elbow flexion exercises may be started if needed
4. Light strengthening exercises are started with light tubing or 1-kg weights for elbow flexion, extension, forearm rotation and wrist flexion and extension
5. Ice after strengthening exercises

Criteria before moving to next phase: Elbow flexion to 125 degrees and forearm ROM by 8 weeks. Full passive extension ROM from 125 degrees of flexion

Post-Op 2-6 Months:

Goals:

1. Continue to strengthen triceps and surrounding musculature
2. Progress both WB and NWB strengthening activities

Exercises:

1. Gradual weight/thera-band resistance training for triceps tendon
2. Closed chain and co-contraction shoulder strengthening
3. Gradual introduction of throwing activities and plyometrics as authorized by MD.

Criteria for Release to Activities/Work/Sport:

- 1. Full strength of triceps, shoulder musculature**
- 2. Biodex/isokinetic testing for supination-pronation or elbow flexion/extension**
- 3. Within 15% of contralateral upper extremity**
- 4. No complaints of pain**