

Rehabilitation Protocol: Ulnar Collateral Ligament (UCL) Reconstruction

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ARTHROSCOPIC SURGERY | JOINT RECONSTRUCTION



Name: _____

Date: _____

Diagnosis: _____

Date of Surgery: _____

IMMEDIATE POSTOPERATIVE PHASE (Weeks 1-3)

- **Goals**
 - Protect graft and healing tissue
 - Decrease pain/inflammation
 - Prevent muscular atrophy
- **Week 1**
 - Brace: Posterior splint at 90° elbow flexion
 - Wrist AROM extension/flexion immediately
 - Knee ROM postoperative day 1
 - Gripping exercises
 - Wrist ROM
- **Week 2**
 - Brace: Elbow ROM 25 - 100° (Gradually increase 5° extension/ 10° flexion per week)
 - Continue all exercises listed above
 - Initiate elbow extension isometrics
 - Continue wrist ROM exercises
 - Initiate light scar mobilization over graft harvest incision
 - Cryotherapy to both elbow and graft harvest site
- **Week 3**
 - Brace: Elbow ROM 15 - 155°
 - Continue all exercises above
 - Elbow ROM in brace
 - Initiate active ROM of wrist and elbow (NO RESISTANCE)
 - Initiate active ROM shoulder
 - ER/IR tubing
 - Elbow flexion/extension
 - Lateral raises
 - Initiate light scapular strengthening exercises
 - Incorporate stationary bike for lower extremity

INTERMEDIATE PHASE (Weeks 4-7)

- **Goals**
 - Gradual increase to full ROM
 - Promote healing of reconstructed tissue
 - Regain and improve muscle strength
 - Restore full function of graft
- **Week 4**
 - Brace: Elbow ROM 0 - 125°
 - Begin light resistance exercises for arm (1 lb)
 - Wrist curls, extension, pronation and supination
 - Elbow extension and flexion
 - Progress shoulder program emphasizing rotator cuff and scapular strengthening
 - Initiate shoulder strengthening with light dumbbells
- **Week 5**
 - Elbow ROM 0 - 135°
 - Discontinue brace
 - Continue all above exercises. Progress all shoulder and upper extremity exercises
- **Week 6**
 - AROM: 0 - 145° without brace
 - Progress elbow strengthening exercises
 - Initiate Thrower's Ten Program
 - Initiate shoulder external rotation strengthening
- **Week 7**
 - Progress Thrower's Ten Program (progress weight)
 - Initiate PNF diagonal patterns (light)

ADVANCED STRENGTHENING PHASE (Weeks 8-14)

- **Goals**
 - Increase strength, power and endurance
 - Maintain full elbow ROM
 - Gradually initiate sporting activities
- **Week 8**
 - Initiate eccentric elbow flexion and extension
 - Continue isotonic program for forearm and wrist
 - Continue shoulder program – Thrower's Ten Program
 - Manual resistance diagonal patterns
 - Initiate plyometric exercise program (2 hand plyos close to body only)
 - Chest pass
 - Side throw close to body
 - Continue calf and hamstrings stretching
- **Week 10**
 - Continue all exercises listed above
 - Program plyometrics to 2 hand drills away from the body
 - Side to side throws
 - Soccer throws
 - Side throws

- **Weeks 12-14**
 - Continue all exercises
 - Initiate isotonic machines strengthening (if desired)
 - Bench press (seated)
 - Lat pull down
 - Initiate interval hitting program

RETURN TO ACTIVITY PHASE (Weeks 15-32)

- **Goals**
 - Continue to increase strength, power and endurance of upper extremity musculature
 - Gradual return to sport activities
- **Week 15**
 - Continue strengthening program
 - Emphasis on elbow and wrist strengthening and flexibility exercises
 - Maintain full elbow ROM
 - Initiate one hand plyometric throwing (stationary throws)
 - Initiate one hand wall dribble
 - Initiate one hand baseball throws into wall
- **Week 16**
 - Initiate interval throwing program
 - Continue Thrower's Ten Program and plyos
 - Continue to stretch before and after throwing
- **Week 22-24**
 - Progress in throwing program
- **Week 30-32**
 - Gradually progress to competitive throwing/sports