Connecticut Orthopaedics

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Post Operative Protocol

Precautions
Aggressive elbow flexion ROM for 4-6 weeks
Biceps strengthening for 6 weeks
Closed kinetic chain exercises for 6-8 weeks

Phase I – Immediate Post Op
Weeks 0 to 4:

Goals:
- Protect healing site for 4-6 weeks
- Decrease pain/inflammation
- Decrease muscular atrophy
- Promote tissue healing

Week 1
- Brace: 90 deg elbow flexion for 10 days
- ROM: Wrist AROM ext/flexion immediately post-op
- Elbow compression dressing (5-7 days)
- Exercises:
  - Gripping exercises
  - Wrist ROM
  - Shoulder isometrics (no Shoulder ER)
  - Cryotherapy: to elbow joint as needed

Week 2
- Brace: Hinged elbow brace locked at 90° flexion when not in therapy
- Exercises: Continue all exercises listed above
  - Initiate PROM of elbow 30°-100° (greater extension is acceptable)
  - Initiate elbow extension isometrics (sub-painful)
  - Continue wrist ROM exercises 4-5 x daily
  - Initiate light scar mobilization over distal incision
  - No biceps or active elbow flexion
  - Continue wrist ROM exercises 6-8 x daily
  - Cryotherapy: Continue ice to elbow

Week 3
- Brace: Hinged elbow brace open to ROM as above
- Exercises: Continue all exercises listed above
  - Elbow ROM 6-8 x daily
  - Initiate active ROM Wrist and Elbow (No resistance)
  - Continue PROM/AAROM elbow motion
  - Elbow ROM (minimal) 15°-105° progress extension as tolerated
  - Initiate shoulder rehab program
    - Tubing IR/ER
    - Full can
    - lateral raises
    - Elbow extension
  - Initiate light scapular strengthening exercises
  - May incorporate bicycle for lower extremity strength & endurance

Week 4

- Brace: Unlock completely
- Elbow ROM 0° to 125°
- Exercises: Begin light resistance exercises for arm
    - Wrist curls. Extensions, pronation, supination
    - Elbow extension
    - Progress shoulder program emphasizing rotator cuff and scapular strengthening
    - Initiate shoulder strengthening with light dumbbells
    - Initiate Throwers Ten if overhead athlete

Phase II—Intermediate Phase

Weeks 5-8

Goals: Gradual increase to full ROM

- Promote healing of repaired tissue
- Regain and improve muscular strength

Week 5

- ROM: Elbow ROM 0°-135°
    - Discontinue hinged elbow brace
- Continue all Exercises: Progress all shoulder and UE exercises (progress weight 1 lb.)

Week 6

- AROM: 0°-145° without brace or full ROM
- Exercises: Continue Throwers Ten Program
    - Progress elbow strengthening exercises

Week 7

- Progress Thrower's Ten Program (progress weights)
- Initiate PNF diagonal patterns (light)

Phase III—Advanced Strengthening

Weeks 8-14

Goals: Increase strength, power, endurance

- Maintain full elbow ROM
- Gradually initiate sporting activities

Week 8

- Exercises: Initiate eccentric elbow flexion/extension
    - Continue isotonic program: forearm & wrist
    - Continue shoulder program Throwers Ten Program
    - Manual resistance diagonal patterns
    - Initiate plyometric exercise program
        - Chest pass
        - Side throw close to body
    - Continue stretching calf and hamstrings

Week 10

- Exercises: Continue all exercises listed above
    - Program plyometrics to 2 hand drills away from body
        - Side to side throws
        - Soccer throws
        - Side throws
        - Increase plyometrics as tolerated

Phase IV—Return to Activity

Weeks 12-16

Goals: Continue to increase strength, power, and endurance of upper extremity musculature

- Gradual return to sport activities

Week 12

- Exercises: 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

Weeks 14-16

- Exercises: Continue interval throwing program
- Gradual return to sport