Connecticut Orthopaedics

Megan R. Wolf, MD
Sports Medicine/Foot & Ankle

Ulnar Collateral Ligament Reconstruction
Post-Operative Protocol

Post-Op – Week 1 (Day 1- Day 7):
Splint is worn for one week at 90 degrees
Gripping exercises with a soft ball or rolled towel the day after surgery
Finger and wrist AROM (NO RESTRICTION) if splint allows.
- Full non-painful AROM: supination, pronation, radial & ulnar deviation
- Very light stretch of wrist & fingers

Isometric exercises: Shoulder (NO ER); Bicep
Knee PROM (if gracilis graft)
Use crutch PRN for 3-5 days (if gracilis graft)
Day 3- Day 6: Initiate recumbent bike (very light work; no sweating)

Week 2 (Day 8 – Day 14):
*Day 8- Day 10: Brace ROM set to 0-120 degrees at post-op visit (this setting used for 5 weeks)
3 times per day: out of brace to work on elbow extension
Continue exercises above
Isometric exercises: Add elbow extension
Low level abdominal exercises (NO UPPER EXTREMITY USE)

Week 3 (Day 15 – Day 21):
Light hamstring stretch (if gracilis graft)
Light hamstring isometrics (if gracilis graft)
Progress to light wrist stretching (if palmaris longus)
Progress abdominal/core strengthening exercises (NO UPPER EXTREMITY USE)
Shoulder AROM (BRACE ON; NO WEIGHT)
- Full can
- Abduction
- ER/IR (wrist neutral – very light resistance)
- Elbow flexion/extension (no more than 1lb.)
- Scapular retraction-rows (sitting, forearms on table, wrist in neutral)

Light scapular strengthening
Lower extremity exercises (NO RESISTANCE THROUGH THE ARM)
- Straight leg raise
- Hip abduction/adduction
- Hip IR/ER

Upright, stationary bike (may start sweating during activity
Light scar massage over graft site/distal incision as soon as incision is closed for at least two days

Week 4 (Day 21 – Day 28): *See attached for Shoulder and Scapula Programs*
Program 1: Shoulder – Exercises 1, 2 & 7 (no more than 1 lb.)
Program 2: Shoulder – Exercises 1, 2, & 3 (no weight)
Program 4: Scapula – Exercises 5, 6, 7 & 8 (no weight; palm down/forearm neutral)
Wrist exercises
- Flexion/Extension
- Supination/Pronation
- Radial/Ulnar deviation

Elbow Flexion/Extension (progress to 2 lbs.)
Leg machine exercises (NO HOLDING WITH ARM; NO PRESSURE/PULSING IN ARM)

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Week 5 (Day 28 – Day 35):
Progress previous Shoulder and Scapula exercises in Programs 1, 2 and 4 by 1 lb.
Progress elbow flexion/extension to 3 lbs.
UBE: No resistance

Week 6 (Day 36- Day 42):
Discontinue brace at 6 weeks post-op (42 days)
Progress previous Shoulder and Scapula exercises in Programs 1, 2 and 4 by an additional 1lb.
Progress other allowed exercises to 4-5 lbs.
Increase lower extremity exercises to medium intensity
Progress lower extremity exercises (if gracilis graft). Progress as tolerated.
UBE: Gradually progress resistance as tolerated

Week 7 (Day 43 - Day 49):
Initiate light manual ROM with elbow protected (SHOULD NOT HAVE PAIN)
Shoulder, Elbow, Wrist/forearm
Progress elbow flexion and extension to 5-7 lbs.
Initiate shoulder ER exercises to complement existing Shoulder/Scapular exercises
Program 1: Shoulder (may perform all exercises; see attached Program)
Program 4: Scapula (may perform all exercises: see attached Program)

Week 8 (Day 50 – Day 56):
Initiate Throwers Ten Exercise Program

1A. Diagonal Pattern D2 Extension
1B. Diagonal Pattern D2 Flexion
2A. External Rotation at 0 degrees Abduction
2B. Internal Rotation at 0 degrees Abduction
3. Shoulder Abduction to 90 degrees
4. Scaption, Full can
5. Sidelying External Rotation
6A. Prone Horizontal Abduction (Neutral)
6B. Prone Horizontal Abduction (Full ER, 100 degrees Abduction)
6C. Prone Rows
6D. Prone Rows into External Rotation
7. Press-ups
8. Push-ups (start on wall and progress to floor)
9A. Elbow Flexion
9B. Elbow Extension (Abduction)
10A. Wrist Extension
10B. Wrist Flexion
10C. Supination
10D. Pronation

Progress manual ROM to medium intensity
May initiate eccentric loading
May start treadmill jogging

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Week 9 (Day 57 - Day 63):
Continue Throwers Ten Program
2-handed plyometrics (ie: chest pass, side-to-side)
Gradually progress treadmill jogging to outdoor jogging

Week 10 (Day 64 – Day 70):
Continue Throwers Ten Program
Outside agility and low-level, lower body plyometric activities
Initiate bodyblade exercises
(ONLY BELOW 90 degrees of shoulder flexion &/or abduction with elbow straight. Can perform shoulder ER/IR at 0 degrees of shoulder flexion & abduction)

Week 11 (Day 71 – Day 77):
Continue Throwers Ten Program
Progress the 2-handed plyometrics (ie: overhead soccer throws, overhead throw downs, side-chops)

Week 12 (Day 78 – Day 91):
Continue Throwers Ten Program
Initiate large muscle groups with machine exercises (ie: bench press, lat pull-downs)
Progress to running if there is no swelling or pain
May start swimming

Week 13 (Day 92 – Day 98):
Continue Throwers Ten Program and Shoulder/Scapula Exercises
Initiate high repetition (30), light weight dumbbell exercises for the upper extremity
Progress upper extremity machine work to medium weight and reps of 20
May golf

Week 14 (Day 99 – Day 105):
Continue Throwers Ten Program, adding ER/IR at 90 degrees Abduction and Empty Can exercises
Program 2: Shoulder (may perform all exercises: see attached Program)
Program 3: Shoulder (may perform all exercises: see attached Program)
1-handed plyometric (ie: wall dribble, deceleration catch, 90/90 throw)

Week 15 (Day 106 – Day 112):
Continue Throwers Ten Program and Shoulder/Scapula Exercises
Progress to medium weight dumbbell exercises for the upper extremity with repetitions of 20

Week 16 (Day 113 – Day 119):
Continue Throwers Ten Program and Shoulder/Scapula Exercises
Positional player may initiate interval hitting program

Week 17 – Week 21 (Day 120 – Day 154):
Continue Throwers Ten Program and Shoulder/Scapula Exercises
*May return to normal training at Week 17 Post-Op
Continue to work on strength, power and endurance

Week 22 (Days 155 & beyond):
Continue Throwers Ten Program and Shoulder/Scapula Exercises
Initiate Rehabilitative Throwing Program