

POSTOPERATIVE REHABILITATION DISTAL BICEPS REPAIR

Beginning at 1-2 weeks post-operative, a ROM brace is placed, with an extension block at 30°. Active and PROM exercises are initiated to the elbow, forearm, wrist and digits 6 times a day for 10 minute sessions. The brace should be worn during these sessions.

3 Week Postop

Active and PROM exercises are initiated to the elbow, forearm, wrist and digits 6 times a day for 10 minute sessions, with the elbow out of the brace. The brace can be unlocked during these exercises. Elbow extension is restricted to 20° when in the brace.

4 Weeks Postop

Active and PROM exercises are initiated to the elbow, forearm, wrist and digits 6 times a day for 10 minute sessions, with the elbow out of the brace. The brace can be unlocked during these exercises. Elbow extension is restricted to 0° when in the brace.

6 Week Postop

Active and PROM exercises are initiated to the elbow, forearm, wrist and digits 6 times a day for 10 minute sessions, with the elbow out of the brace. The brace may be discontinued at this time.

Dynamic splinting may be initiated for the elbow and/or forearm if PROM remains limited. Progressive strengthening may be initiated for the elbow, forearm, wrist and hand.

10-12 Weeks Postop

Progressive strengthening may be initiated for the elbow, forearm, wrist and hand.

A work conditioning program is recommended for patients with manual labor jobs that require heavy lifting.

CONSIDERATIONS

Patients are cautioned against unrestricted use of the arm until 6 months postop.

A loss of active elbow flexion between weeks 1 and 6 can be a sign that the repair is being stretched out or becoming loose. Any loss of active flexion that cannot be easily recaptured or attributed to the elbow stiffness should be brought to the immediate attention of the surgeon. When a loss of motion is noted, active extension is limited to 60°, exercise sessions are reduced to 3 – 4 times a day, and the ROM brace is adjusted to 60° until the active flexion is recaptured. Typically, this occurs within 7 – 10 days.