



Orthopedic Surgery, Sports Medicine & Arthroscopy Specialists

Jonathan Watson, MD

REHABILITATION PROTOCOL- Distal triceps tendon repair

The rehabilitation guidelines are presented in a criterion based progression program. General time frames are given for reference to the average, but individual patients will progress at different rates depending on their age, associated injuries, pre-injury health status, rehab compliance, tissue quality and injury severity. Specific time frames, restrictions, and precautions may also be given to protect healing tissues and the surgical repair/reconstruction. It should not be a substitute for one's clinical decision making regarding the progression of a patient's post-operative course based on their physical exam findings, individual progress, and/or the presence of post-operative complications. The therapist should consult the referring physician with any questions or concerns.

Special attention must be given to impairments that caused the initial problem. For example, if the patient is s/p partial medial meniscectomy and they have a varus alignment, post-operative rehabilitation should include correcting muscle imbalances or postures that create medial compartment stress.

INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATIONS: S/p

PHASE 1- Surgery to 2 weeks

REHAB GOALS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protection of the post-surgical repair 2. Avoid contracture 3. Minimize swelling, pain & inflammation
PRECAUTIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minimize activities that stress elbow flexors and supinators 2. splint with elbow immobilized neutral rotation until first postoperative visit. 3. Hinged elbow brace placed after splint removed, 0-45 degrees, locked at 30 deg initially. 4. Avoid excessive shoulder flexion 5. Cryocuff 3-5 times per day for 20 minutes and ice after every therapy session after splint removed
RANGE OF MOTION EXERCISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Codman exercises ○ Shoulder passive ROM ○ Elbow passive extension & pronation. Active/active assist elbow flexion/supination ○ Passive wrist and hand ROM
SUGGESTED THERAPEUTIC EXERCISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sub maximal pain free shoulder & biceps isometrics ○ Week 2- sub maximal pain free triceps isometrics (forearm neutral)

CARDIOVASCULAR EXERCISE	Stationary bike when splint removed with brace on. No gripping handle with operative arm
PROGRESSION CRITERIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minimal pain & swelling ○ Wound healing

PHASE 2- 3-6weeks

REHAB GOALS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protection of the post-surgical repair 2. Continue activity modification (non weight bearing operative arm) 3. Avoid painful exercises 4. Minimize pain and swelling
PRECAUTIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Avoid gripping, lifting, carrying items with operative arm 2. Hinged elbow brace at all times except bathing/PT 3. See below for ROM restrictions 4. Cryocuff 3-5 times per day for 20 minutes and ice after every therapy session
RANGE OF MOTION EXERCISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Week 3-Active assist elbow flexion & supination (elbow extended) ○ Active assist Elbow ROM- Week 3: 0-45 deg, Week 4: 0-60 deg, Week 5: 0-80 deg, Week 6- 0-90 deg ○ AROM of shoulder, wrist, hand ○ Passive elbow extension & pronation
SUGGESTED THERAPEUTIC EXERCISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As above ○ Week 6- putty for grip strength
CARDIOVASCULAR EXERCISE	Stationary bike without gripping of handle with operative arm
PROGRESSION CRITERIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minimal pain & swelling ○ Full elbow flexion and lacking <10 deg of extension

PHASE 3- 7-10 weeks postop

REHAB GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protect surgical repair ○ No pain with ADLs ○ Full ROM ○ Begin to restore Shoulder, scapular, elbow & forearm strength
PRECAUTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Avoid gripping, carrying items with operative arm ○ Hinge elbow brace- week 7: 0-115 deg, week 8: 0-125 deg
RANGE OF MOTION EXERCISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue exercises from phase 2. ○ Can start combination motions (e.g. extension with pronation) ○ If patient has not achieved full ROM by week 8 discuss with surgeon

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Week 8- passive elbow flexion
SUGGESTED THERAPEUTIC EXERCISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sport specific core & lower extremity strengthening. Avoid holding heavy weights in hands ○ Week 7-supine scapular stabilization without weight ○ Week 8- Strengthening elbow flexion, extension, forearm rotation, wrist flexion & extension with tubing/1kg weights ○ Week 8- Shoulder theraband, supine scapular stabilization with 1kg weight
CARDIOVASCULAR EXERCISE	Stationary bike, avoid gripping handle
PROGRESSION CRITERIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Full elbow ROM ○ Pain free w/exercises & ADLs ○ Shoulder ROM equal to contralateral

PHASE 4- 11-14 weeks postop

REHAB GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Begin elbow strengthening program ○ Restore shoulder & forearm flexibility ○ Minimize pain and swelling
PRECAUTIONS	Post-activity soreness should resolve within 24 hours Avoid post activity swelling
RANGE OF MOTION EXERCISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue with flexibility exercises from previous phase ○ Forearm and shoulder stretching, avoid excessive shoulder flexion until week 12
SUGGESTED THERAPEUTIC EXERCISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Progress phase 3 activities with resistance/weight ○ Progress rotator cuff strengthening to 90 deg internal & external position ○ Begin triceps specific exercises ○ Week 12- ok to start light upper extremity weight training ○ Progress core/lower extremity exercises
CARDIOVASCULAR EXERCISE	Progress to upper body ergometry at week 12
PROGRESSION CRITERIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No pain or swelling ○ Full range of motion

PHASE 5- 15+ weeks

REHAB GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Restore normal neuromuscular function ○ Begin sport/work specific activities without pain
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Restore full strength, ROM, endurance ○ Return to sport/work: may be 6-9 mos before strength returns
PRECAUTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Post-activity soreness should resolve within 24 hours
RANGE OF MOTION EXERCISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue with flexibility exercises ○ Lower extremity flexibility per sport
SUGGESTED THERAPEUTIC EXERCISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Progress strengthening from phase 4 ○ Implement sport/work specific exercises and progress as tolerated
CARDIOVASCULAR EXERCISE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to progress from phase 4.
PROGRESSION CRITERIA- RETURN TO SPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Normal grip strength ○ Normal upper extremity flexibility, strength, power, endurance ○ Completion of sport/work specific program ○ Elbow extension & pronation 90% of contralateral side