

ELBOW ARTHROSCOPY REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

PRECAUTIONS:

- No Excessive or aggressive motion first 5 days
- No excessive elbow loading during exercise for 8 weeks
- No throwing for 10 weeks (unless specified by Physician)

MAXIMUM PROTECTION PHASE (WEEKS 1 to 3)

Goals:

- Restore full wrist and elbow ROM
- Decrease swelling & pain
- Promote healing of articular cartilage
- Minimize muscle atrophy

Days 1 to 5 (3-4 x daily)

- Begin gently moving elbow in dressing
- Remove bulky dressing and replace with gauze pads & elastic band-aids
- Immediate post-op hand & wrist ROM, gripping exercises
 - Putty / grip strengthening
 - Wrist flexor stretching
 - Wrist extensor stretching
 - Elevate hand to reduce swelling
 - Continue light elbow AAROM exercises in bulky dressing

Post-op Day 5 through 7

- PROM & AAROM elbow extension & flexion (motion to tolerance)
- Begin PRE-exercises with 1 lb weight
 - Wrist curls
 - Reverse wrist curls
 - Neutral wrist curls
 - Pronation/supination
 - Active elbow flexion & extension (frequent motion- 5 min every hour)

Post-op Week 2 to 4

- Emphasize restoring full elbow ROM
- Begin light overpressure program into extension
- Perform AAROM & PROM
 - Full PROM at end of week 3
- Begin shoulder program week 2
- Thrower's Ten Program week 3
- Running program may begin week 4

Post-op Weeks 5 to 6

- Continue all exercises above
- Emphasis on restoration of full ROM
- If lacking full extension – low load long duration (LLLD) stretching
- Continue AAROM program for articular cartilage healing
- Pool program – light exercises in water (once incisions close)

MODERATE PROTECTION PHASE (WEEKS 6-10)**Goals:**

- Protect articular cartilage healing
- Restore/maintain Full ROM
- Shoulder ROM & Strength

Weeks 6 -10

- Continue AAROM & PROM exercises for elbow
- Initiate resistance for biceps & triceps
- Continue Thrower's Ten Program
- Stretching & ROM program for shoulder
- Continue ROM exercises for elbow
- Core strengthening program
- Still maintain precautions regarding loading of the elbow
- Begin 2 handed plyometric program (chest pass, soccer throw, side to side) week 8

MINIMAL PROTECTION PHASE (WEEKS 10 -16)**Goals:**

- Incorporate shoulder endurance program
- Begin throwing program
- Improve LE strength/core strengthening in preparation for return to competitive sport

Weeks 10 to 16

- Continue AAROM & PROM exercises
- Advanced Thrower's Ten Program initiation
- ROM & Stretch Shoulder
- Core Program
- Running, agility drills etc
- Initiate interval sport programs
- Continue Advanced Thrower's Ten Program
- Continue stretching & flexibility exercises of elbow & shoulder
- Initiate 1 hand plyometric drills at week 10
 - 1 hand throws
 - 1 hand wall dribbles

GRADUAL RETURN TO ACTIVITY PHASE (WEEKS 12 & BEYOND)

Goals:

- Gradual return to activity/sport
- Prepare patient for safe & successful return to sports

Criteria to progress to Advanced Phase:

- Full nonpainful ROM
- No pain or tenderness in elbow/shoulder
- Isokinetic test that fulfills criteria to throw
- Satisfactory clinical exam
- Successful completion of modified throwing program (physician/physical therapist directed)