# Distal Biceps Repair Therapy Protocol

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## POSTOPERATIVE PHASE I:
## (1-3 Weeks)

### GOALS

- Elbow ROM from 30˚ of extension to 120˚ of flexion
- Maintain minimal swelling and soft tissue healing
- Achieve full forearm supination/pronation

### TESTING

- Bilateral elbow and forearm ROM

### EXERCISES

- Set hinged brace at 30˚ of extension and 120˚ of flexion and perform active assistive flexion and active extension exercises within the brace (6 times daily with 2 sets of 10 each time)
- Reset brace at 90˚, the forearm straps are loosened and the patient performs 2 sets of 10 forearm rotations; straps should then be secured
- Ice after exercise, 3-5 times per day
- A sling should be worn only as needed for comfort, with the patient maintaining full shoulder ROM

## POSTOPERATIVE PHASE II:
## (3-6 Weeks)

### GOALS

- Full elbow and forearm ROM by 6 weeks
- Scar management

### TESTING

- Bilateral elbow and forearm ROM
- Grip strengthening at 5-6 weeks

### EXERCISES

- 3 Weeks
  - The extension limit in the brace is changed to 20˚. Flexion remains at 120˚, but patient may remove brace to allow full flexion 2 times per day. The brace stays on at all other times except when washing the arm.
  - Scar massage 3-4 times per day
- 4 Weeks
  - Extension limit is changed to 10˚
  - Continue the same exercises
  - Putty may be used 3 times per day for 10 minutes to improve grip strength.
- 5 Weeks
  - The extension limit is changed to 0˚ and exercises are continued in the brace
- 6 Weeks
  - The brace is discontinued, unless needed for protection
  - Passive elbow extension exercises are initiated if needed
  - Light strengthening exercises are initiated with light tubing or 2-3 lb. weights for elbow flexion, extension, forearm rotation and wrist flexion and extension

### CLINICAL FOLLOW-UP

- The patient usually is seen at 3 weeks and 5-6 weeks, then only as needed with doctor appointments, until full motion is achieved and to monitor the patient's strengthening program

*If you have any problems or questions, please call your doctor's office (8am-5pm).*

*Answering service for after hours.*

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## POSTOPERATIVE PHASE III:
# (6 Weeks-6 Months)

### CLINICAL GOALS

- The strengthening program is gradually increased so that the patient is using full weights by 3 months. It may be as long as 6 months before a patient returns to heavy work

### TESTING

- Grip strengthening
- Elbow ROM

### EXERCISES

- Elbow ROM exercises are performed if ROM is not WNL
- Strengthening exercises to wrist, elbow, forearm and possibly shoulder depending on sport and/or work requirements

### CLINICAL FOLLOW-UP

- The patient is seen only as needed, usually with doctor appointments, to monitor progress with strengthening program

DISCLAIMER: These general rehabilitation guidelines are created by physical and occupational therapists for the rehabilitation of various shoulder and elbow pathologies. These are to simply be used as guidelines. This information is provided for informational and educational purposes, only. Specific treatment of a patient should be based on individual needs and any necessary medical needs are deemed by the treating physician and therapists. The University of Kentucky and the American Society of Shoulder and Elbow Therapists take no responsibility or assume no liability for improper use of these protocols. We recommend that you consult your treating physician or therapist for specific courses of treatment.

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