

Physical Therapy Protocol: Lateral Epicondyle Debridement + Extensor Tendon Repair

Phase 1: Weeks 0 through 6 – Pain Control and Motion Recovery

Physician Goals: Decrease pain and inflammation, regain normal range of motion

Exercises: Passive elbow flexion/extension and forearm pronation/supination range of motion with goal of painless normal motion elbow and wrist motion by the end of week 6; once PROM is full, transition to active ROM; deltoid and rotator cuff isometrics; periscapular stabilizer strengthening (retraction and protraction); desensitization and scar massage as soon as incision is healed, no resisted pronation or supination, no lifting anything heavier than a cup of coffee

Comments: Long arm splint for 1 week, then transition to cock-up wrist splint to be worn at all times until end of postoperative week 6 except for hygiene

Total Visits: 12 – Once to twice per week with daily home stretching

Phase 2: Weeks 6 through 12 – Functional Strength Recovery

Physician Goals: Gradually increase strength to allow for all activities of daily living

Exercises: Rotator cuff and deltoid strengthening with light bands, light weights; initiate light grip strengthening with putty or ball, wrist extension/flexion strength, resisted elbow extension; **beginning week 9** - full active elbow flexion with forearm pronation starting with light weights (start with 1 pound and increase to max of 5 pounds by week 12) as long as able to perform full active ROM without discomfort; Progress elbow strengthening from a flexed and supported elbow position to a fully extended and unsupported elbow position

Comments: Wean out of cock-up wrist splint

Total Visits: 12 – One to two times per week with daily home exercises; strengthening 3x per week including PT

Phase 3: Weeks 12+ – Strength Recovery

Physician Goals: Gradually increase strength to allow for all activities including weightlifting and recreational sports

Exercises: Continue strengthening scapular stabilizers, progress to elbow resistance work with light hand weights or bands and progress as tolerated, increase weight/resistance when 30 repetitions are easy and painless; two hand plyometrics, transition to one hand as tolerated; unrestricted weightlifting beginning at 12 weeks

Comments: Goal of PT is to regain strength needed to perform all ADLs and recreational activities without pain, transition to HEP when ready; Golfers may begin putting at 6 weeks (once elbow motion is full), chipping at 10 weeks, and progress to full golf swings by 3 months postop; Light tennis/pickleball at 12 weeks

Total Visits: 12 – One to two times per week with daily home stretching; strengthening 3x per week including PT