

POST-OPERATIVE REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

Distal Biceps Tendon Repair

William McLaughlin, MD | Sports Medicine Surgery | Advanced Bone & Joint

Phase 1 | 0-2 Weeks

GOALS FOR THIS PHASE

- Protect the repair with sling and splint at all times.
- Keep splint dry and intact.

Immobilization

- Sling and splint at all times.
- Do not get splint wet or dirty; do not remove splint.

Phase 2 | 2-6 Weeks

GOALS FOR THIS PHASE

- Transition to removable extension-block splint at 45° (or brace).
- Begin active-assisted ROM.
- Limit extension to 45°; advance to full extension by 6 weeks.
- Maintain wrist and shoulder ROM.

Immobilization

- Fitted for removable extension-block splint at 45° or brace.
- Splint or brace worn at all times except for exercises and therapy.

Range of Motion

- Begin active-assisted ROM.
- Limit extension to 45°; advance to full extension by 6 weeks.
- Wrist/shoulder ROM exercises.

Phase 3 | 6-9 Weeks

GOALS FOR THIS PHASE

- Discontinue elbow splint/brace.
- Continue passive/active-assisted elbow ROM.
- Initiate biceps and cuff/deltoid isometrics.
- Maintain wrist/shoulder ROM.

Immobilization

- May discontinue elbow splint/brace.

Range of Motion

- Continue passive/active-assisted elbow ROM.
- Maintain wrist/shoulder ROM.

Strengthening

- Begin biceps isometrics.
- Begin cuff/deltoid isometrics.

Phase 4 | 9-12 Weeks

GOALS FOR THIS PHASE

- Begin active elbow flexion against gravity.
- Maintain elbow, wrist, and shoulder ROM.
- Advance to resistive strengthening of deltoid/rotator cuff.

Range of Motion

- Maintain elbow ROM along with wrist and shoulder.

Strengthening

- Begin active elbow flexion against gravity.
- Advance to resistive strengthening of deltoid/rotator cuff.

Phase 5 | 12 Weeks - 6 Months

GOALS FOR THIS PHASE

- Begin gradual elbow flexion strengthening and advance as tolerated.

Strengthening

- Begin gradual elbow flexion strengthening and advance as tolerated.

This protocol is a general guideline. Progression is patient-specific and at the discretion of William McLaughlin, MD.