NON-OPERATIVE REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

Non-Operative Epicondylitis

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

Phase 1 | Acute Phase

GOALS FOR THIS PHASE

- Decrease inflammation.
- Promote tissue healing.
- Retard muscular atrophy.

Modalities

- Cryotherapy.
- Whirlpool.
- HVGS.
- Phonophoresis.
- Friction massage.
- Iontophoresis (with anti-inflammatory, e.g., dexamethasone).

Stretching

- Wrist extension/flexion.
- Elbow extension/flexion.
- Forearm supination/pronation.

Strengthening

- Isometrics: wrist extension/flexion, elbow extension/flexion, forearm supination/pronation.

Precautions

- Avoid painful movements (e.g., gripping).

Phase 2 | Subacute Phase

GOALS FOR THIS PHASE

- Improve flexibility.
- Increase muscular strength and endurance.
- Increase functional activities; return to function.

Strengthening

- Emphasize concentric/eccentric strengthening.
- Concentration on involved muscle group.
- Wrist extension/flexion.
- Forearm pronation/supination.
- Elbow flexion/extension.
- Initiate shoulder strengthening (if deficiencies noted).

Flexibility

- Continue flexibility exercises.

Bracing & Modalities

- May use counterforce brace.
- Continue cryotherapy after exercise/function.

Activity

- Gradual return to stressful activities.
- Gradually re-initiate once-painful movements.

Phase 3 | Chronic Phase

GOALS FOR THIS PHASE

- Improve muscular strength and endurance.
- Maintain/enhance flexibility.
- Gradual return to sport / high-level activities.

Strengthening

- Continue strengthening exercises (emphasize eccentric/concentric).
- Continue to emphasize deficiencies in shoulder and elbow strength.

Flexibility

- Continue flexibility exercises.

Bracing & Modalities

- Gradually decrease use of counterforce brace.
- Use of cryotherapy as needed.

Activity & Equipment

- Gradual return to sport activity.
- Equipment modification: grip size, string tension, playing surface.
- Emphasize maintenance program.

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