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Rehabilitation Protocol for Post Operative Distal Bicep Tendon Repair

Immediate Post-operative Phase: POD 1-10

Goals:

- Protect the anatomic repair
- Prevent negative effects of immobilization Diminish pain and inflammation
- Immobilization: Posterior splint, elbow immobilization at 90° Wrist/hand ROM exercises 4-6 times per day
- Hand gripping exercises 4-6 times per day

Intermediate Phase: PO Week 2-8

Goals:

Gradually restore full ROM (week 8) in hinged elbow brace (provided for patient at first MD follow up). Preserve the integrity of the surgical repair

No elbow flexion or supination strengthening for 8 weeks

Range of Motion Progression:

Week 2: 55° to full elbow flexion

Week 3: 45° to full elbow flexion

Week 4: 25° to full elbow flexion

Week 5: 15° to full elbow flexion

Week 6: 10° to full elbow flexion. Begin full supination/pronation

Week 7: Full ROM of elbow; Full supination/pronation

Week 8: Discontinue hinged elbow brace

Range of Motion Exercises:

Week 2-5: Passive ROM ONLY for elbow flexion and supination

Active and active-assisted ROM for elbow extension and pronation

Week 6: Active and active-assisted ROM for elbow flexion, extension, supination, and pronation



Strengthening Phase: PO Week 8-16

Goals:

- Gradually restore elbow flexion and supination strength to >80% of contralateral UE

Strength Exercises:

Week 8: Progressive resistive exercise program is initiated for elbow flexion and supination

Week 14: May initiate light weight training such as bench press and shoulder press, continue to avoid heavy pulling

Week 16: Full unrestricted strengthening activities