

Central Texas

Sports Medicine & Orthopaedics, P.A.

Ulnar Collateral Ligament Reconstruction Physical Therapy Protocol

Phase I – Immediate Postoperative Phase (0 – 3 weeks)

- Goals:**
- Protect healing tissue
 - Decrease pain/inflammation
 - Retard muscular atrophy
 - Protect graft site – allow healing

Post-Operative Week 1:

- **Brace:** Posterior splint at 90 degrees elbow flexion
- **Range of Motion:** Wrist AROM ext/flexion immediately postoperative
- Elbow postoperative compression dressing (5-7 days)
- Graft site compression dressing 7-10 days as needed
- Exercises:
 - Gripping exercises
 - Wrist ROM
 - Shoulder isometrics (NO shoulder ER)
 - Biceps isometrics
 - Cryotherapy to elbow joint and to graft site

Post-Operative Week 2:

- **Brace:** Elbow ROM 25 – 100 Degrees
 1. Gradually increase ROM -5 degrees Ext/10 degrees of Flex per week
- **Exercises:**
 - Continue all exercises listed above
 - Elbow Range of Motion in brace (30-105 degrees)
 - Initiate elbow extension isometrics
 - Continue wrist ROM exercises
 - Initiate light scar mobilization over distal incision (graft)
 - Cryotherapy to elbow and graft site

Post-Operative Week 3:

- **Brace:** Elbow ROM 15 – 115 degrees
- **Exercises:**
 - Continue all exercises listed above
 - Elbow ROM in brace
 - Initiate active ROM Wrist and Elbow (No resistance)
 - Initiate light wrist flexion stretching
 - Initiate active ROM shoulder
 - ✓ Full Can
 - ✓ Lateral raises
 - ✓ ER/IR raises
 - ✓ Elbow flex/extension
 - ✓ Initiate light scapular strengthening exercises.
 - ✓ May incorporate bicycle for lower extremity strength & endurance

Phase II – Intermediate Phase (Week 4 - 7)

- Goals:**
- Gradual increase to full ROM
 - Promote healing of repaired tissue
 - Regain and improve muscular strength
 - Restore full function of graft site

Week 4:

- **Brace:** Elbow ROM 0 – 125 degrees
- **Exercises:**
 - Begin light resistance exercises for arm (One lb)
 - Wrist curls, extensions, pronation, supination, elbow extension/flexion
 - Progress shoulder program emphasize rotator cuff and scapular strengthening
 - Initiate shoulder strengthening with light dumbbells

Week 5:

- **Elbow ROM** 0 – 135 degrees **Discontinue Brace**
- **Exercises:**
 - Continue all exercises
 - Progress all shoulder and UE exercises (progress weight one LB)

Week 6:

- **AROM:** 0 – 145 degrees without brace or full ROM
- **Exercises:**
 - Initiate Thrower's Ten Program
 - Progress elbow strengthening exercises
 - Initiate shoulder external rotation strengthening
 - Progress shoulder program

Week 7:

- **Exercises:**
 - Progress Thrower's Ten Program (progress weights)
 - Initiate PNF diagonal patterns (light)

Phase III – Advanced Strengthening Phase (Week 8 - 14)

Goals: Increase strength, power, endurance
 Maintain full elbow ROM
 Gradually initiate sporting activities

Week 8 - 9:

- **Exercises:**
 - Initiate eccentric elbow flexion/extension
 - Continue isotonic program: forearm & wrist
 - Continue shoulder program – Thrower's Ten Program
 - Manual resistance diagonal patterns
 - Initiate Plyometric exercise program
 - ✓ 2 hand plyos close to body only
 - ✓ Chest pass
 - ✓ Side throw close to body
 - Continue stretching calf and hamstrings

Week 10 - 11:

- **Exercises:**
 - Continue all exercises listed above
 - Program plyometrics to two-hand drills away from body
 - ✓ Side to side throws
 - ✓ Soccer throws
 - ✓ Side throws

Week 12 - 14:

- **Exercises:**
 - Continue all exercises
 - Initiate isotonic machines strengthening exercises (if desired)

- ✓ Bench press (seated)
- ✓ Lat pull down
- Initiate golf, swimming
- Initiate interval hitting program

Phase IV – Return to Activity Phase (Week 14 – 32)

Goals: Continue to increase strength, power, and endurance of upper musculature.
Gradual return to sport activities.

Week 14:

- **Exercises:**
 - Continue strengthening program
 - Emphasis on elbow and wrist strengthening and flexibility exercises
 - Maintain full elbow ROM
 - Initiate one hand Plyometric throwing (stationary throws)
 - Initiate one hand wall dribble
 - Initiate one hand baseball throws into wall

Week 16:

- **Exercises:**
 - Initiate interval throwing program (Phase I) {Long toss program}
 - Continue Thrower's Ten Program and plyos
 - Continue to stretch before and after throwing

Week 22 - 24:

- **Exercises:**
 - Progress to Phase II throwing (once successfully completed Phase I)

Week 30 - 32:

- **Exercises:**
 - Gradually progress to competitive throwing/sports

Please note that rehabilitation protocols are to be used as general guidelines in the overall treatment and plan of care for the patients of Central Texas Sports Medicine & Orthopaedics. Supervised treatment and care under physicians, physical therapists, and athletic trainers are essential in a patient progressing through each phase of the rehabilitation process. Our doctors, therapists, and trainers will determine the appropriate progression of the specific protocol for each patient.