

Covenant Medical Group • Orthopaedics

Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine • Garrett Kerns, DO

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CLINICAL PROTOCOL FOR POST-OP DISTAL BICEPS TENDON RUPTURE

Frequency: 1-2 times per week.

Duration: Average estimate of formal treatment up to 12 weeks based on Occupational Therapy evaluation findings.

Documentation:

- Progress Note to physician at each follow-up appointment.
- Follow treatment calendar for daily requirements.
- Discharge Summary within two weeks of discharge.

INITIAL EVALUATION (Two Weeks Post-Op)

Goals:

1. Abbreviated evaluation:
 - Assess for edema.
 - Assess incision site.
2. Fabricate Phoenix elbow hinge splint blocking at 80-75° extension with blocks placed to prevent active flexion.
3. Instruct patient in home exercise program of passive elbow flexion/extension within splint as well as passive supination/pronation with elbow flexed to at least 90°.
4. Educate patient regarding precautions.

Criteria:

- Patients that have met the following required **Self-Management Criteria** can be placed on a home exercise program:
 - No limitation of range of motion of elbow and forearm within splint boundaries.
 - Minimal to no pain at rest.
 - Apparent adherence to post-op precautions.
- For these patients, weekly follow-up appointments are needed to increase extension of splint until Discharge Criteria has been met.
- Patients that have not meet the required criteria will need a course of formal rehabilitation 2-3 times per week until that criteria has been met.

DISCHARGE CRITERIA

- Patient has achieved elbow/forearm/wrist active range of motion within normal limits (NOTE: full active elbow flexion is not allowed until eight weeks post-op/full elbow extension is not allowed until ten weeks post-op).
- Patient is able to perform light functional activities with affected upper extremity.
- Patient has followed through/been independent with home exercise program.
- Patient has been compliant with precautions.
- Patient has failed to comply with instructions and/or precautions.

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GENERAL POST-OP TREATMENT GUIDELINES

Two Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elbow is blocked at 80-75°.• Begin home exercise program as instructed at initial evaluation.
Four Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elbow is extended by 10-15° and continues to be extended progressively until full extension is achieved by approximately 10 weeks post-op.• Continue with home exercise program.
Eight Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Active flexion is begun within splint.• Continue with home exercise program.
Ten Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Splint is discontinued.• Full active range of motion exercises are begun.
Twelve Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upper extremity strengthening is begun.
Sixteen Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full use is allowed.

References:

Strauch, M.D., Robert J. and Rosenwasser, M.D., Melvin P.: *Single Incision Repair of Distal Biceps Tendon Rupture. Techniques in Hand and Upper Extremity Surgery II* (4); 253-261, 1998.

These are general guidelines and may vary depending on your surgery/surgeon.

