

# Inland Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine

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## POSTOPERATIVE REHABILITATION FOR ELBOW ARTHROSCOPY

### **I. Initial Phase (week 1)**

Goal: Full wrist and elbow range of motion, decrease swelling, decrease pain, retardation or muscle atrophy

- A. Day of surgery
  - 1. Begin gently moving elbow in bulky dressing
- B. Postoperative days one and two
  - 1. Remove bulky dressing and replace with elastic bandages
  - 2. Immediate post-op hand, wrist and elbow exercises
    - a. Putty/grip strengthening
    - b. Wrist flexor and extensor stretching
    - c. Wrist curls and reverse wrist curls
    - d. Neutral wrist curls
    - e. Pronation / supination
    - f. A/AAROM elbow extension/flexion
- C. Postoperative days 3-7
  - 1. PROM elbow extension/flexion (to tolerance), emphasize regaining full extension over first 2 weeks
  - 2. Begin PRE exercises with 1 lb weight
    - a. Wrist curls and reverse wrist curls
    - b. Neutral wrist curls
    - c. Pronation / supination
    - d. Broomstick roll-up

### **II. Intermediate Phase (weeks 2-4)**

Goal: Improve muscular strength and endurance; normalize joint arthrokinematics

- A. Week 2 range of motion exercise (overpressure into extension)
  - 1. Addition of biceps curl and triceps extension
  - 2. Continue to progress PRE weight and repetition as tolerable
- B. Week 3
  - 1. Initiate biceps and triceps eccentric exercise program
  - 2. Initiate rotator cuff exercise program
    - a. External and internal rotators
    - b. Deltoid
    - c. Supraspinatus
    - d. Scapulothoracic strengthening

### **III. Advanced Phase (weeks 4-8)**

Goals: Preparation of athlete for return to functional activity

Criteria to progress to advanced phase:

- 1. Full non-painful range of motion
  - 2. No pain or tenderness
  - 3. Isokinetic test that fulfills criteria to throw
  - 4. Satisfactory clinical exam
- A. Week 6
    - 1. Continue maintenance program emphasizing muscular strength, endurance, flexibility
    - 2. Initiate interval throwing program phase I

\*Modified from Altcheck, The Athlete's Elbow 2001