

Inland Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine

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Ulnar Collateral Ligament Reconstruction Rehabilitation Protocol

Phase 1—Immediate Postoperative Phase

0 to 3 weeks

- Goals:
 - Protect healing tissue.
 - Decrease pain/inflammation.
 - Retard muscular atrophy.

1 week

- Set posterior splint at 90° of elbow flexion.
- Begin wrist active ROM extension / flexion .
- Use elbow compression dressing (2 to 3 days)
- Begin Exercises:
 - Gripping exercises (Play-doh).
 - Wrist ROM.
 - Shoulder isometrics (except shoulder ER).
- Biceps isometrics.
- Use cryotherapy.

2 weeks

- Apply ROM brace settings from 30 to 100°.
- Initiate wrist isometrics.
- Initiate elbow flexion / extension isometrics.
- Continue all exercises listed above.
- Gentle scar massage/mobilization.

3 weeks

- Advance brace 15 to 110° (gradually increase ROM; 5° of extension and 10° of flexion per week).
- Continue scar mobilization.

Phase 2—Intermediate Phase

4 to 8

- Goals:
 - Gradually increase ROM.
 - Promote healing of repaired tissue.
 - Regain and improve muscular strength.

4 weeks

- Set ROM brace (10 to 120°).
- Begin light resistance exercises for arm (1 lb):
 - Wrist curls, extensions.
 - Pronation / supination.
 - Elbow extension / flexion.
- Progress shoulder program; emphasize rotator cuff strengthening (avoid ER until the sixth week).
- Begin gentle passive ROM for elbow flexion / extension.

6 weeks

- Set ROM brace at 0 to 130°; perform active ROM at 0 to 145° (without brace).
- Progress elbow strengthening exercises.
- Initiate shoulder ER strengthening.
- Progress shoulder program.