

Distal Bicep Repair Protocol

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Post-Op Weeks 1-3:

Clinical Goals

- Elbow ROM from 30 of extension to 120 of flexion
- Maintain minimal swelling and soft tissue healing
- Achieve full forearm supination/pronation

Testing

- Bilateral elbow and forearm ROM

Exercises

- Six times per day the patient should move elbow from 30 degrees of extension to 120 degrees of flexion and perform active assistive flexion and active extension exercises. Two sets of 10 are performed.
- The patient performs 2 sets of 10 forearm rotations.
- Ice after exercise, 3-5 times per day
- A sling should be worn only as needed for comfort with the patient maintaining full shoulder ROM.

Post-Op Weeks 3-6:

Clinical Goals

- Full elbow and forearm ROM by 6 weeks
- Scar management

Testing

- Bilateral elbow and forearm ROM
- Grip strengthening at 5-6 weeks

Exercises

3 weeks:

- The extension limit is gradually increased to 0. Flexion remains at 120, but patient may actively attempt full flexion 2 times per day.
- Scar massage 3-4 times per day.

4 weeks:

- Continue the same exercises.
- Putty may be used 3 times per day for 10 minutes to improve grip strength.

5 weeks:

-The extension limit is maintained to 0 and exercises are continued.

6 weeks:

- Passive elbow extension exercises are initiated if needed.
- Light strengthening exercises are initiated with light tubing or 2-3 pound weights for elbow flexion, extension, forearm rotation and wrist flexion and extension.
- Ice is continued after strengthening exercises.

Post-Op 6 Weeks to 6 Months:

Clinical Goals

-Strengthening program is gradually increased so that the patient is using full weights by 3 months. It may be as long as 6 months before patient returns to heavy work/labor.

Testing

- Grip strengthening
- Elbow ROM

Exercises

- Elbow ROM exercises are performed if ROM is not WNL
- Strengthening exercises to wrist, elbow, forearm, and possibly shoulder depending on sport and/or work requirements

Clinical Follow-up

-The patient is seen only as needed, usually with doctor appointments, to monitor progress with strengthening program