



Mid-America Orthopedics

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UCL Protocol

Phase I – Immediate Post Surgical Phase (Day 1-21):

Goals:

- Protect healing tissue
- Decrease pain/inflammation
- Retard muscular atrophy
- Promote scar mobility

Week 1:

- Posterior splint (applied in the operating room) at 90 degrees elbow flexion with forearm in neutral
- Range of Motion – Wrist active range of motion (AROM)
- Elbow compression dressing: Apply 2-3 days after surgery

Exercises:

- Gripping exercises (AROM)
- Wrist AROM/PROM
- Sub-maximal shoulder isometrics (**no shoulder ER isometrics to avoid force on repaired UCL)
- Sub-maximal pain-free biceps isometrics @ 90 degrees of elbow flexion

Week 2:

- **Brace** – Application of hinged elbow brace set at 45-90 degrees of open motion
- Initiate sub-maximal and pain free wrist isometrics
- Initiate elbow AAROM
- **Continue all exercises listed above**
- Edema/scar management:
Scar massage/scar pads as needed
Manage edema with light compression as needed

Week 3:

- **Brace** – Advance hinged elbow brace 30-105 degrees
(Gradually increase ROM 15 in each direction with full ROM by 6wks)

Exercises:

- Continue all exercises listed above

II. Intermediate Phase (Weeks 4-8):

Goals:

- Gradual increase in range of motion
- Promote healing of repaired tissue
- Regain and improve muscular strength

Week 4-5:

- **Brace** – hinged elbow brace set 15-120 degrees
- **Exercises:**
- Wrist curls, extensions, pronation, supination, radial and ulnar deviation with light weight (1-2#)
- Elbow extension/flexion AAROM/AROM
- Progress shoulder isometrics to isotonic, emphasize rotator cuff strengthening (Avoid resisted external rotation until 6th week to minimize forces on repaired UCL)

Weeks 6-8:

- **Brace** – hinged elbow brace completely open.
- **Brace may be discontinued at the end of week 6**
- **Exercises:**
- AROM 0-145 degrees without brace
- Continue elbow isometrics appropriate
- Initiate shoulder external rotation strengthening
- Initiate concentric elbow isotonic

III. Advanced Strengthening Phase (Weeks 9-13):

Goals:

- Increase strength, power, and endurance
- Maintain full elbow ROM
- Gradually initiate sporting/functional/occupational activities

Week 9-10:

- **Exercises:**
- Initiate eccentric elbow flexion/extension
- Continue isotonic program; forearm & wrist
- Continue shoulder program
- Manual resistance diagonal patterns
- Initiate Thrower's Ten exercises

Week 11-14:

- **Exercises:**
- Continue all exercises listed above
- Initiate CKC activities and plyometrics

IV. Return to Activity Phase (Weeks 14-1 year):

Goals:

- Continue to increase strength, power, and endurance of upper extremity musculature.
- Gradual return to sport/functional/occupational activities

Week 14-10 months:

- **Exercises:**
- Athletes initiate interval throwing program (phase I) – **MUST BE CLEARED BY PHYSICIAN** ----Please refer to ITP handout
- Non-athletes initiate endurance program that simulates desired work activities/requirements
- Continue UE strengthening program (especially flexor - pronation strengthening)
- Emphasis on overall UE flexibility program to maximize ROM/muscle length (especially shld posterior capsule stretch)

10 months:

- **Exercises:**
- Begin Phase II throwing from the mound – if applicable
- Return to full work capacity (lifting, pulling, reaching, pushing)

1 Year-Full competitive throwing once cleared by physician

Patient progression during the time frames along with general modality and exercise choice is left up to the discretion of the treating therapist. If you have any questions regarding this protocol, please contact (316) 978-9000