

PT PROTOCOL

Distal Biceps Tendon Repair

Rehabilitation Protocol



Phase 1 Days 0-7

Immobilization: Posterior splint, elbow immobilized at approximately 90°, for 5-7 days.

Range of Motion

- Immobilized in splint; no formal elbow motion during this phase.

Phase 2 Weeks 1-3

Brace: Hinged elbow brace initiated around day 7, with extension progressively unblocked to reach full extension-to-flexion range by week 3.

Range of Motion

- Gradually increase elbow range of motion within the brace, progressing to full range by the end of this phase.
- Formal physical therapy begins around week 2.

Therapeutic Exercises

- Gentle isometrics for triceps and shoulder muscles, beginning around week 2-3.

Phase 3 Weeks 3-6

Brace: Continue weaning; discontinue by week 6 if adequate motor control has been achieved.

Range of Motion

- Progress toward full, unrestricted elbow range of motion.

Therapeutic Exercises

- Continue isometrics for triceps and shoulder; gentle active range of motion.

Phase 4 Weeks 6-10

Therapeutic Exercises

- Active range of motion without resistance.
- Begin a progressive resistive exercise (PRE) program for elbow flexion and supination/pronation, starting with 1 lb. and gradually increasing.
- Gradually increase shoulder strengthening program.

Phase 5

Weeks 10–16

Therapeutic Exercises

- Continue progressive resistive exercise program, gradually increasing resistance.
- At week 14: may initiate light weight training, such as bench press and shoulder press.
- Initiate an endurance program that simulates work activities/requirements.

Phase 6

Months 4–6+

Therapeutic Exercises

- Increase strength and endurance.
- Bilateral upper extremity plyometrics after week 16.
- Single-arm plyometrics after weeks 20–22.
- *Goal to return to sport at month 6+: sport-specific movements, with graded participation in practice and full, pain-free practice prior to participation in competition.*