

PT PROTOCOL

Open Lateral Epicondylitis Tendon Debridement

Rehabilitation Protocol

1

Weeks 1-3

Splint 7-10 days; gentle ROM, isometrics, submax gripping

2

3-6 Weeks

Rotator cuff/scapular work; PRE program, aerobic conditioning

3

6-12 Weeks

Full non-painful ROM required; interval program, return to sport

Milestones above are goals, not guarantees; progression is criterion-based.

Phase 1

Weeks 1-3

Immobilization: Posterior splint, elbow immobilized at 90°, for 7-10 days.

Acute Goals

- Reduce inflammation, promote tissue healing, retard muscle atrophy.

Therapeutic Exercises

- Week 1: movement of wrist and fingers.
- Week 2: gentle elbow, wrist, and shoulder range of motion; isometrics and gripping exercises; light elbow activities only.
- Week 3: submaximal isometrics; begin antigravity wrist flexion, wrist extension, supination, pronation (use a counterforce brace during exercise if painful). Once 30 reps can be performed without pain, progress to a 1-pound weight or light resistance band. All exercises performed with the elbow flexed to 90° and resting on a table or the lower extremity.
- Overpressure into extension, 3-4 times daily; continue joint mobilization techniques (biceps, triceps, wrist extension/flexion, supination/pronation).
- Continue ice after exercise.

Phase 2

Weeks 3-6

Goals

- Increase range of motion; improve strength, power, and endurance; initiate functional activities.

Therapeutic Exercises

- Rotator cuff, elbow, and scapular stabilization training with light resistance.
- Aerobic conditioning on stationary bike or treadmill.
- Overpressure into elbow extension; continue progressive resistive exercise (PRE) program for elbow and wrist musculature.
- Initiate shoulder program (Thrower's Ten Shoulder Program).
- Continue joint mobilization and use of ice after exercise.

Criteria to Enter Phase 3

- Full, non-painful range of motion; no pain or tenderness.
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Goals

- Improve strength, power, and endurance; gradual return to functional activities.
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Therapeutic Exercises

- Continue progressive resistive exercise program for elbow and wrist; continue shoulder program; continue stretching for elbow/shoulder.
- Initiate an interval program and gradually return to sporting activities.
- *Return to athletics once grip strength has returned to normal.*