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DISTAL BICEPS REPAIR REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

Phase I: 1-3 weeks

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 range his elbow from 30° of extension to 120° 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.

Phase II: 3-6 Weeks

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.

Clinical Follow-up

- The patient usually is seen at 10-14 days post-op, 6 weeks, 12-14 weeks

Phase III: 6 Weeks to 6 Months

Clinical Goals

- The 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 a patient returns to heavy work or sports

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.