

Post-operative Protocol: Distal Biceps Tendon Repair

This protocol provides a general guideline for your recovery after a distal biceps tendon repair. Your progression will be based on your individual healing and progress. Please follow these instructions carefully.

Phase I: Immediate Post-operative Period (Weeks 0-4)

- Sling:

- You will be in a sling for 3-4 weeks to protect the repair.
- The sling should be when walking around.
- You may remove the sling for personal hygiene and for the exercises listed below.

- Wound Care:

- Keep your incision clean and dry.
- Do not submerge the wound in water (no baths, hot tubs, or swimming).
- Monitor for signs of infection, including increasing redness, swelling, warmth, discharge from the incision, or a fever. Contact my office if you have any concerns.

- Pain and Swelling:

- Apply ice packs to the elbow for 15-20 minutes several times a day to manage pain and swelling.
- Keep your arm elevated above the level of your heart as much as possible.
- Use pain medication as prescribed.

- Exercises:

- To prevent stiffness, perform the following gentle exercises 3-4 times per day:
 - Gently open and close your hand.
 - Bend and straighten your wrist.
 - Perform gentle shoulder pendulum swings and circles.
 - Light elbow straightening and bending can be performed but **Do not** actively turn your forearm/palm up. Avoid lifting any objects.

Phase II: Early Mobilization (Weeks 4-8)

- Sling:

- You will begin to wean off the sling at 4 weeks as comfort allows.

- Range of Motion:

- You will begin formal physiotherapy.
- Focus will be on gradually restoring your elbow and forearm range of motion. This will start with light active motion.
- Do not lift any objects heavier than a coffee cup.
- Avoid any forceful use of the biceps muscle.

Phase III: Progressive Strengthening (Weeks 8-12)

- Exercises:

- Under the guidance of your physiotherapist, you will begin a gentle strengthening program.
- This will involve light resistance exercises for your elbow and forearm.

- The focus is on building endurance and gradually increasing strength.
- **Restrictions:**
- Continue to avoid heavy lifting, forceful pulling, or sudden jerking motions with the operative arm.

Phase IV: Advanced Strengthening and Return to Activity (Week 12+)

- **Exercises:**
- You will progress to more advanced strengthening exercises to prepare you for returning to your regular activities, work, and sport.
- **Return to Activity:**
- A gradual return to unrestricted activities and sports typically occurs between 4-6 months post-operatively, based on your strength, range of motion, and the demands of the activity.
- Clearance for returning to heavy labour or contact sports will be determined during your follow-up appointments.

Follow-up:

Your follow-up appointments are crucial for monitoring your progress. Your first post-operative appointment will typically be scheduled for 10-14 days after your surgery.