

## **Elbow Arthroscopy – Cartilage Fixation/Repair**

### **Physical Therapy Post-op Protocol**

#### **Week 1**

##### **Primary Goal: Allow incision healing**

- Splint on elbow until first post-operative visit (5-10 days)
- Transitioned to hinged brace to be worn for 6 weeks
- Elevate on pillows to heart level or above
- Begin ball squeezes and wrist/shoulder motion

#### **Weeks 1-3**

##### **Primary goals: early motion, decrease swelling, protect healing cartilage**

- Hinged brace to allow motion from 60-120 degrees of motion
- May be taken off during hygiene
- Avoid supination (No not turn palm upwards towards ceiling)
- Do not use arm to push self out of chair
- Ice 3-4x daily
- Shoulder pendulums, scapular strengthening, core strengthening

#### **Weeks 3-6**

##### **Primary goals: full motion, protect healing cartilage**

- Hinged brace gradually increase elbow flexion and extension 10-15 degrees per week
  - Goal to achieve full extension by 6 weeks
- Continue shoulder and wrist ROM
- Begin light resistance for shoulder, scapula, and wrist (curls and extensions)
  - Forearm neutral or pronated when using therabands
- May incorporate Blood Flow Resistance (BFR)
- Avoid compression on the elbow
  - No pushups, presses, or using arm to get out of a chair/car

#### **Weeks 6-10**

##### **Primary goals: full motion, increase strengthening**

- Continue AROM exercises for elbow
- Initiate resistance strengthening for biceps & triceps
  - Incorporate Blood Flow Restriction
- Continue Thrower's Ten Program, if indicated
- Stretching & ROM program for shoulder
- Continue ROM exercises for elbow
- Avoid compression on the elbow
  - No pushups, presses, or using arm to get out of a chair/car
- Core strengthening program and introduce balance/proprioception training

### **Weeks 10-16**

#### **Primary goals: increasing weight bearing through elbow**

- Gradual loading of the elbow
  - Incorporate light weight presses and incline push-ups
- Elbow strengthening with increasing resistance
  - Continued use of Blood Flow Resistance (BFR)
- Continue Thrower's Ten program
- Incorporate shoulder endurance program
- Begin throwing program, if indicated
- Improve LE strength/core strengthening in preparation for return to competitive sport, if indicated

### **Weeks 16+**

#### **Primary goals: return to throwing/sport**

- Functional assessment of overall physical conditioning and throwing mechanics
- Modify or discontinue formal therapy and implementing home therapy maintenance regimen