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Distal Biceps Tendon Repair

REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

PHASE	RANGE OF MOTION	SPLINT / BRACE	THERAPEUTIC EXERCISE
Phase I **0–1 week** GOAL TO ADVANCE *Swelling controlled*	No elbow motion. Shoulder, wrist and hand motion	Posterior splint at 90° elbow flexion, forearm neutral	Grip, finger and wrist motion, shoulder motion (no reaching behind back); ice and elevation. No lifting
Phase II **1–6 weeks** GOAL TO ADVANCE *Full flexion; extension progressing*	Passive elbow flexion and forearm rotation in brace. Active motion (gravity-eliminated) from week 4. NO active elbow bending or palm-up turning before week 4*	Hinged brace, full flexion allowed; extension block: 90° (week 2), 45° (week 3), 30° (week 4), 20° (week 5); discontinue at 6 weeks	Wrist and hand motion, shoulder motion, scar massage. No lifting; no weight bearing through the arm
Phase III **6–10 weeks** GOAL TO ADVANCE *Full motion against gravity*	Full active motion; combined motions (straightening with palm down) from week 8	None	Light daily use. No lifting until 8 weeks. Gradual weight bearing through the arm from week 8 (elbow bent → straight by week 10)
Phase IV **10–16 weeks** GOAL TO ADVANCE *Pain-free motion; strength improving*	Full	None	Week 10: gentle isometrics. Weeks 10-12: light biceps curls, palm-up/palm-down resistance, triceps; shoulder strengthening
Phase V **4–6 months** GOAL TO ADVANCE *Strength ≥90% of other side*	Full without discomfort	None	Progressive strengthening; two-arm plyometrics at 16 weeks, one-arm at 20-22 weeks; return to heavy lifting and sport at about 6 months**

NOTES

*Bending the elbow and turning the palm up are the biceps' jobs; using them early pulls on the repair

**If approved by physician