

Lateral Epicondylitis Debridement and Repair: “Tennis Elbow”

Phase I: Early healing (*weeks 1-2*)

- Operative Splint to be removed at first post-op visit (1 week)
- Velcro wrist splint to be placed once operative splint removed
 - Ok to remove for gentle exercises (as below) and hand washing
- No strengthening or repetitive exercises
- Shoulder/Elbow/Wrist/Hand gentle active and passive ROM
 - Prevention of swelling and stiffness
 - Focus on regaining terminal elbow extension
- Use elevation and ice to treat elbow/forearm/hand swelling
- No lifting with palm down & no forceful gripping

Phase II: Stretching (*weeks 3-6*)

- Continue to wear wrist splint for ADLs
- No heavy strengthening or repetitive exercises
- Gradually increase A/PROM exercises. Goal to have full ROM by 6 weeks post-op
- As pain allows, initiate submaximal isometrics are started into wrist flexion, radial dev, ulnar dev, supination, pronation, supinated elbow flexion and pronated elbow extension
- As pain allows, begin antigravity wrist flexion, extension, supination and pronation
- No lifting with palm down & no forceful gripping
- Teach HEP for frequent home stretching

Phase III: Early strengthening (*weeks 7-12*)

- Wean out of wrist splint over 5-7 days
- Avoid pain. If exercises are causing pain, slow down until pain free

- Continue with ROM and add strengthening exercises starting with isometrics
- Advance to resistance exercises and eccentric strengthening as tolerated
- Continue therapeutic exercises: Rotator cuff, elbow and scapular stabilization training with light resistance. Wrist flexion, extension, supination/pronation, ulnar and radial deviation with resistance as tolerated. Progress the patient from a flexed and elbow supported elbow to a fully extended and unsupported elbow
- Light stretching is encouraged at this stage with emphasis on end range and passive overpressure (low load/long duration)
- Pain free grip strengthening with putty or ball
- Gentle soft tissue mobilization/massage along and against fiber orientation.
- Use modalities as needed
- Teach Mill's maneuvers for frequent home stretching

Phase III: Strengthening and return to activities (*weeks 7-12*)

- Return to full activities is typically 12 weeks after surgery
- Full strengthening of elbow, wrist, shoulder, and scapula allowed without restrictions
- Encourage continued lifelong stretching for elbow and common extensor tendon including Mill's maneuvers