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Post-Operative Protocol for Distal Biceps Tendon Repair

Immediate Post-operative Phase: Restrictive Motion

Goals:

- Protect the anatomic repair
- Prevent negative effects of immobilization
- Diminish pain and inflammation

Day 1-14:

- Immobilization: Posterior splint, elbow immobilization at 90°
- Wrist/hand ROM exercises 4-6 times per day
- Hand gripping exercises 4-6 times per day

Intermediate Phase: Moderate Protection Phase

Goals:

- Gradually restore full ROM (week 8) in hinged elbow brace
- Preserve the integrity of the surgical repair
- No elbow flexion or supination strengthening for 10 weeks

Range of Motion Progression:

- Week 2: 45° to full elbow flexion
- Week 3: 35° to full elbow flexion
- Week 4: 25° to full elbow flexion
- Week 5: 15° to full elbow flexion
- Week 6: 10° to full elbow flexion. Begin full supination/pronation
- Week 7: Full ROM of elbow; Full supination/pronation
- Week 8: Discontinue hinged elbow brace

Range of Motion Exercises:

- Week 2-5: Passive ROM for elbow flexion and supination
 - Active and active-assisted ROM for elbow extension and pronation
- Week 6: Active and active-assisted ROM for elbow flexion, extension, supination, and pronation

Phase III: Strengthening Phase

- Week 10: Progressive resistive exercise program is initiated for elbow flexion and supination
 - Begin with one lb and gradually increase strengthening program
- Week 14: May initiate light weight training such as bench press and shoulder press
- Week 16: Full unrestricted strengthening activities