

Elbow Radial Head Repair Rehabilitation Protocol

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Post-Operative Protocol:

0-1 Week Post-Op:

- Cryotherapy 3-5 times a day for 10 minutes.
- AROM exercise for the elbow.
- AROM exercises for the wrist and hand.
- May use tensor wrap for edema as required.
- Elbow CPM for passive flexion and extension, with forearm pronated or neutral.

1-3 Weeks Post-Op:

- Begin AAROM exercises for flexion and extension of the elbow, use small theraball on bench, or circles and saws in sitting with vertical cane.
- Passive forearm pronation, supination to tolerance, once 90 degrees of elbow flexion is achieved. Do not push into overt pain!
- Therapist mobilization - PROM, gentle grade I-II oscillations of elbow joint. Do not push into overt pain or be too aggressive.
- Scar massage.

3-6 Weeks Post-Op:

- Begin AAROM exercises for pronation and supination.
- 4-6 weeks post-op - begin gentle AROM for elbow flexion, extension, supination and pronation.
- Therapist mobilization as required to restore full PROM.

General Post-Operative Goals Weeks 6-12:

1. Restore AROM to full and painfree in elbow, wrist and hand.
2. Begin strengthening program.
3. Return to light ADL's with affected upper extremity.

6-8 Weeks Post-Op:

- Continue with the above program.
- Add isometric elbow flexion, extension, pronation and supination exercises.
- Self-stretching exercises for elbow flexion, extension, pronation and supination.

- Continue with turnbuckle and therapist stretching for any ROM lags.

8-12 Weeks Post-Op:

- Continue with above interventions as required.
- Begin light resistance program with free weights, and theraband resistance tubing for elbow flexion, extension, pronation, and supination. Begin with 2lb. weights and progress by 1lb. a week as appropriate. Progress to wall push-ups, and eccentric loading as tolerable (usually towards 12 weeks).
- Provide shoulder and wrist/hand strengthening exercises as necessary.
- Return to normal ADL's, begin preparing for return to work where appropriate.
- Prepare for discharge with home exercise program when ROM and strength gains plateau (16- 24 weeks post-op).