



Ulnar Collateral Ligament Reconstruction

Michael H. Johnson, MD

Please follow the protocol along with the instructions listed on the patient's referral. This protocol is for a repair of the ulnar collateral ligament (Tommy John Surgery) using palmaris longus tendon graft. Patients will begin physical therapy after their first post-operative visit. Ice should be used throughout therapy for the elbow and graft site at the wrist.

Immediate Postoperative Phase Goals

- Protect Graft
- Protect healing tissue
- Decrease pain and inflammation
- Prevent muscle atrophy

Week 1

- Posterior splint at 90 degrees flexion
- Wrist AROM flex/ext
- Gripping exercises
- Ice to elbow and graft site at wrist
- Deltoid and periscapular isometrics

Week 2

- Brace to be worn at all times for the first 6 weeks set at 30-100 degrees
- Progress ROM: 5 degrees of extension/10 degrees of flexion per week
- Brace ROM 25-100
- Exercises: Continue as above
- Continue wrist ROM exercises
- Elbow extension isometrics
- May initiate light scar mobilization over graft site at the wrist
- Continue use of ice

Week 3

- Elbow ROM: 15-115 degrees in brace
- Continue as above
- AROM wrist and elbow (no resistance)
- Light wrist flexion stretching
- AROM Shoulder
- IR/ER
- Lateral raises
- Light scapula strengthening
- May ride stationary bike

Intermediate Phase (Weeks 4-7) Goals

- Gradual increase to full elbow ROM
- Promote healing of repaired tissue
- Regain and improve muscular strength
- Restore full function of graft site

Week 4

- Brace: ROM 0-120
- Begin light resistance (1#) for:
 - Wrist Flexion/extension/supination/pronation
 - Elbow flexion/extension
- Progress rotator cuff and scapula strengthening except for external rotation
- Initiate shoulder strengthening with light dumbbells

Week 5

- ROM 0-135 degrees
- Continue as above progressing all shoulder and UE exercises

Week 6

- AROM 0-145 without brace or full ROM
- Discontinue brace at the end of week 6
- Progress elbow strengthening exercises
- May begin external rotation strengthening
- Initiate Thrower's Ten Program:
 - Diagonal Pattern (D2) Extension
 - Diagonal Pattern (D2) Flexion
 - ER/IR at 0 degrees Abduction
 - ER/IR at 90 degrees Abduction
 - Abduction to 90 degrees
 - Scaption ER
 - Prone H ABD Neutral
 - Prone H ABD (Full ER/100 degrees Abduction)

- Prone Row
- Press ups
- Pushups
- Elbow Flexion/Extension
- Supination/Pronation
- Wrist Flexion/Extension

Week 7

- Progress Thrower's Ten Program (progress weights)
- Initiate light PNF diagonal patterns

Advanced Strengthening Phase (Weeks 8-14) Goals

- Increase strength, power and endurance
- Maintain full elbow ROM
- Gradually initiate sporting activities

Week 8

- Continue progressive strengthening for wrist and forearm
- Continue Thrower's Ten program
- Initiate elbow eccentric strengthening for flexion/extension
- Manual resistance for diagonal patterns
- Initiate light plyometrics 2 hands close to the body
- Chest pass
- Side throws close to the body

Week 10

- Continue exercises as above
- Progress plyometrics to 2 hand drills away from the body
- Side to side throws
- Soccer throws
- Side throws

Weeks 12-14

- Continue all exercises
- Begin advanced lifting using machines if desired
- Bench press (Seated)
- Lat pull downs
- May begin golf, swimming
- Initiate interval hitting program

Return to Activity Phase (Weeks 14-32) Goals

- Continue to increase strength, power and endurance of upper extremity musculature
- Gradual return to sport activities

Week 14

- Continue strengthening program
- Emphasis on elbow and wrist strengthening and flexibility exercises
- Maintain full elbow ROM
- Initiate one hand plyometric throwing (stationary throws)
- Initiate one hand dribble
- Initiate one hand baseball throws into wall

Week 16

- Initiate interval throwing program (Phase 1)
- Continue Thrower's Ten Program and plyometrics
- Continue to stretch before and after throwing

Weeks 22-24

- Progress to Phase 2 throwing (once successfully completed Phase 1)

Weeks 30-32

- Gradually progress to competitive throwing/sports