



# Thumb CMC Arthroplasty with LRTI Post-Operative Instructions

**Christopher Honstad, MD**

Phone: 952-442-2163 | Fax: 952-442-2029

## OVERVIEW

- It is important to protect your surgical repair for best results.
- It may take 6 months or more for full pain relief and recovery of strength.
- Expect continued improvement for up to a year after surgery.

## PHASE I- WEEKS 0 TO 2

- Splint/ACE wrap is placed at the time of surgery; keep clean and dry at all times until post-op appointment.
- Ice the wrist and base of the thumb for 20 minutes, three to four times a day.
- We recommend 1000mg of Tylenol 3 times per day for the first 7 days after surgery.
  - Ibuprofen 800mg (or other anti-inflammatory as tolerated) 3 times a day after surgery.
- Bend your fingers into a full fist 10 times an hour while awake to reduce finger stiffness
- NO lifting over 2lbs with the operative hand.

## PHASE II- WEEKS 2-6

- Your surgical splint will be removed to take out stitches at your first post-op visit at about 2 weeks after surgery.
- You will go to Occupational/Hand Therapy to be fitted with a custom splint to protect the thumb.
  - The splint will go across your wrist and onto your thumb.
- Wear this splint at ALL times, except when showering or doing hand exercises for the first 8 weeks.
- Begin passive ROM of the CMC joint; abduction and extension only.
- Keep moving other fingers
- Work on touching the tip of the thumb to the tip of the other fingers.
- Attend hand therapy 1-2 times per week, work on exercises at home
- Do NOT use thumb for grip or pinch
- Ice therapy and gentle massage will help with swelling

## PHASE III- WEEKS 6-12

- Wear custom splint during the day until 12 weeks post-op, then can transition to soft thumb brace for comfort.
  - Can remove brace at night starting at week 8
- Continue hand therapy exercises
- Can begin grip and pinch strengthening at 8 weeks
- Light functional activities (buttoning clothes, writing, etc)

## PHASE IV- WEEKS 12-16

- Progressive strengthening with addition of active thenar adduction
- Heavier grip exercises are added; may use thumb with putty
- Avoid heavy gripping and repetitive or strenuous activities
- Wear soft thumb brace during light activities

#### PHASE V- WEEKS 16+

- Slow return to activities or work that involve heavy lifting, gripping, or vibration
- Full activities if pain free, no swelling, or tenderness
- Soft brace for comfort



## Thumb CMC Arthroplasty with LRTI Post-Operative Rehabilitation

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#### PHASE I- WEEKS 0-2

- No formal OT, home gentle active finger motion, remain in post-op splint

#### PHASE II- WEEKS 2-6

- Custom forearm based thumb spica thermoplast splint fabrication with wrist in 20 degrees extension, avoid thumb radial abduction, MP slight flexion, IP joint free.
- Begin gentle passive and active ROM of the CMC joint; abduction and extension only
  - Avoid flexion/adduction of the CMC and thumb opposition to the base of the small finger
- Avoid grip or pinch
- Modalities, edema control, scar management as indicated
- OT 1-2 times per week, home exercise program

#### PHASE III- WEEKS 6-12

- Continue hand therapy exercises
- Begin thenar strengthening in abduction, palmar, and radial abduction at 6 weeks
- Begin grip and pinch strengthening at 8 weeks
- Light functional activities

#### PHASE IV- WEEKS 12+

- Progressive strengthening with addition of active thenar adduction
- Progressive grip strengthening exercises
- Avoid heavy lifting or gripping until 16 weeks
- Activity as tolerated after 16 weeks as long as range of motion and pain have normalized