

# Rehabilitation Guidelines for Elbow Lateral Collateral Ligament Repair

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- General Information
  - Total Recovery time is between 4-6 months depending on factors such as injury severity, patient sport/activity/age and type of repair.
  - Adherence to rehab protocol guidelines and restrictions is critical in avoiding re-injury or failures.
- Immobilization
  - Initial splint for 10-14 days.
  - Transition to hinged elbow brace locked at 90 degrees of flexion should be worn for 8 and then for additional 4 weeks in uncontrolled environments (around dogs, kids, in crowds, etc.).
  - Hinged elbow brace should be worn while sleeping for 6 weeks.
  - Hinged elbow brace may be removed in controlled environments for light activity after 8 weeks depending on surgeon clearance.
- Personal Hygiene / Showering
  - Avoid getting splint wet.
  - Ok to get arm wet after surgery (if no wound related issues) when transitioned into hinged elbow brace.
  - Avoid baths, saunas, pools, lakes, etc. for 6 weeks.
  - DO NOT remove steristrips, allow them to fall off on their own.

## *Phase 1 (2-6wks):*

### *Aerobic*

- Stationary bike x 30 mins (Arm in hinged elbow brace)
- Easy walking on level surface x 30 mins

### *Range of motion*

- Slow progression of supination, elbow extension and elbow flexion , keep elbow in neutral shoulder abduction – AVOID VARUS ALIGNMENT.
- A/PROM to protect LCL
- Avoid full elbow extension combined with supinated forearm for up to 16 weeks
- No weight-bearing (CKC) exercises for at least 8–16 weeks
- No excessive flexion for 8–12 weeks
- Unrestricted activity, including sports-specific skills, may be limited for 9 months.

### *Strength*

- Wrist and grip only

### *Modalities*

- Ice for 20 minutes, 3 times per day

*Phase I Goals*

- Pain free passive range of motion to limits above

*Phase II (6-8wks):*

*Aerobic*

- Stationary bike x 45 mins (Arm in hinged elbow brace)
- Easy walking on level surface x 60 mins

*Range of motion*

- Full range of motion only with elbow in neutral abduction, avoid varus stress on elbow

*Strength*

- Perform isometric flexion extension activity with elbow at 90 degrees of flexion

*Phase III Goals*

- ROM as above

*Phase III (8-12wks):*

*Aerobic*

- Same as Phase II

*Range of motion*

- Unrestricted pronation-supination and flexion-extension avoid varus position

*Strength*

- Begin dynamic elbow flexion extension strength in neutral abduction only with 5-10 lbs only

*Phase III Goals*

- Restoration of elbow motion.

*Phase V (12-16wks): Discontinue hinged elbow brace*

*Aerobic*

- Versaclimber, Stairmaster, Running

*Range of motion*

- Progress to full range of motion

*Strength*

- Increase weight to 20-30 lbs
- Avoid varus strengthening activities.

*Phase V Goals*

- Restore triceps and biceps strength

*Phase VI (>16 wks):*

*Aerobic*

- May start swimming

*Strength*

- Begin with lat pull downs and progress to pull-ups
- Initiate free weights & machine lifting

*Phase VI Goals*

- Ability to perform push-ups, pull-ups, swim.
- Return to contact/overhead sports/airborne operations/deployment when cleared by surgeon.