Jennifer Thomson, MD
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY | SPORTS MEDICINE

Rehabilitation Protocol:
Lateral Epicondylitis Debridement and Repair: "Tennis Elbow"

Phase I:
0-2 weeks
Early healing

- Operative Splint to be removed at first post-op visit (1 week)
- Velcro wrist splint to be placed once operative splint removed
- Ok to remove for gentle exercises (as below) and hand washing
- No strengthening or repetitive exercises
- Shoulder/Elbow/Wrist/Hand gentle active and passive ROM
- Prevention of swelling and stiffness
- Focus on regaining terminal elbow extension
- Use elevation and ice to treat elbow/forearm/hand swelling
- No lifting with palm down & no forceful gripping

Phase II:
2-6 weeks
Stretching

- Continue to wear wrist splint for ADLs and sleeping
- No heavy strengthening or repetitive exercises
- Gradually increase A/PROM exercises. Goal to have full ROM by 6 weeks post-op
- As pain allows, initiate submaximal isometrics are started into wrist flexion, radial dev, ulnar dev, supination, pronation, supinated elbow flexion and pronated elbow extension
- As pain allows, begin antigravity wrist flexion, extension, supination and pronation
- No lifting with palm down & no forceful gripping
- Teach HEP for frequent home stretching

Phase III:
6-12 weeks
Early Strengthening

- Wean out of wrist splint over 5-7 days
- Avoid pain. If exercises are causing pain, slow down until pain free
- Continue with ROM and add strengthening exercises starting with isometrics
- Advance to resistance exercises and eccentric strengthening as tolerated
- Continue therapeutic exercises: Rotator cuff, elbow and scapular stabilization training with light resistance. Wrist flexion, extension, supination/pronation, ulnar and radial deviation with resistance as tolerated. Progress the patient from a flexed and elbow supported elbow to a fully extended and unsupported elbow
- Light stretching is encouraged at this stage with emphasis on end range and passive overpressure (low load/long duration)
- Pain free grip strengthening with putty or ball
- Gentle soft tissue mobilization/massage along and against fiber orientation.
- Use modalities as needed
- Teach Mill's maneuvers for frequent home stretching

Phase IV: 12+ weeks
Strengthening and Return to Activities

- Return to full activities is typically 12 weeks after surgery
- Full strengthening of elbow, wrist, shoulder, and scapula allowed without restrictions
- Encourage continued lifelong stretching for elbow and common extensor tendon including
- Mill's maneuvers

Phone: 201-639-6620