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Distal Biceps Tendon Repair

General Goals

- Protect the surgical repair during healing (first 6–8 weeks)
- Gradually restore full range of motion (ROM)
- Begin strengthening without compromising the repair
- Return to full function and sport safely (~4–6 months)

Phase I: Protection & Early Passive Motion (Weeks 0–2)

Goals:

- Protect repair
- Reduce pain and swelling
- Initiate controlled passive ROM

Precautions:

- No active elbow flexion or forearm supination
- Avoid lifting, pushing, or pulling
- Arm typically in a posterior splint at 90° flexion, forearm neutral or slight supination

Interventions:

- Wrist and hand AROM
- Passive elbow flexion/extension to comfort (within surgeon's range limits)
- Passive supination/pronation (avoid active movement)

- Ice and elevation

Phase II: Controlled Active Motion (Weeks 2–6)

Goals:

- Achieve nearly full ROM
- Initiate gentle active movements without resistance

Precautions:

- No resisted flexion or supination
- Avoid lifting heavier than a coffee cup (~1 lb)

Interventions:

- Progress to active-assisted → active ROM of elbow and forearm
- Begin gentle isometrics for triceps, shoulder
- Continue hand/wrist exercises
- Brace gradually unlocked (usually 10–15° per week) to allow increased ROM

Phase III: Early Strengthening (Weeks 6–12)

Goals:

- Restore full ROM
- Begin light strengthening of elbow and forearm muscles

Precautions:

- Avoid heavy lifting, resisted biceps curls early on

Interventions:

- Begin isometric → light isotonic elbow flexion and supination (e.g., <2 lb dumbbell)
- Shoulder strengthening as needed

- Emphasis on eccentric control of biceps by week 10

Phase IV: Advanced Strengthening (Weeks 12–16)

Goals:

- Build strength, endurance, and control
- Restore full function for daily use

Interventions:

- Progress resistance and repetitions (free weights, cables, bands)
- Include compound movements (rows, curls, pulls) as tolerated
- Begin body-weight loading (e.g., plank holds)

Phase V: Return to Sport/Work (Weeks 16–24+)

Goals:

- Return to job, sports, and heavy lifting safely
- Maximize strength and prevent re-injury

Interventions:

- Plyometric drills if needed (e.g., med ball throws, power lifts)
- Job/sport-specific drills (e.g., throwing, lifting mechanics)
- Max effort resisted flexion and supination

Typical Timeline

Time Post-Op	Key Activity
0-2 weeks	Splint or hinged brace, passive ROM
2-6 weeks	Active ROM, avoid resistance

6-12
weeks Begin light strengthening

3-4
months Advance strength
 training

4-6
months Return to full sport or
 manual labor