



Ulnar Collateral Ligament (UCL) Reconstruction Rehabilitation Protocol

Stephanie A. Boden, MD

Diagnosis: UCL tear

ROM Restrictions: Limit extension to 15° x 4 weeks, then progress to full motion as tolerated

Brace: Splint x 7-14 days, then hinged elbow brace as below

Phase I: Week 0-2 (Home Exercise)

- Sling and splint at all times
- Gentle wrist and shoulder ROM
- Finger exercises

Phase II: Weeks 2-4 (Physical Therapy Begins after Splint Removed)

- Hinged elbow brace with extension block at 15°
- Brace should be worn at all times including exercise. Can remove for hygiene only.
- Continue wrist and shoulder ROM
- Begin Active Assist ROM
 - Initially Limit Extension to 15°
 - **NO active elbow flexion**
 - Gentle joint mobilizations

Phase III: Weeks 4-16

- Discontinue elbow brace.
- PROM into AAROM and AROM at elbow and shoulder as tolerated
- Begin strengthening exercises for wrist, forearm, elbow and shoulder
- No aggressive weight lifting until 12 weeks post-op
- No chest flies or lifts stressing UCL
- Avoid valgus stress on elbow until 2 months post-op
- Total body conditioning / aerobic exercises may begin

Phase IV: 4-9 months

- May begin interval-throwing program progressing from 45ft. up to 180ft.
 - Pitchers are not asked to throw past 120ft., infielders not past 150ft.
- May progress from one distance level to next when following are met:
 - No pain or stiffness while throwing
 - No pain or stiffness after throwing
 - Strength is sufficient throughout the final set with min. fatigue
 - Throwing motion is effortless and fundamentally sound
 - Accuracy is consistent and throws are on line
- For pitchers, mound program begins at completion of 120ft. level



- Catcher is initially moved forward, but throwing with pitching motion is reserved for the mound
- No flat ground pitching is allowed

Phase V: 9-12 months

- Return to competition is permitted when following conditions are met:
 - Trunk, scapula, shoulder and arm muscle strength/balance have returned to normal
 - No pain while throwing
 - Throwing balance, rhythm and coordination have been reestablished