

# Ulnar Collateral Ligament (UCL) Reconstruction Rehabilitation Protocol

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**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