

Ulnar Collateral Ligament (UCL) Repair with Internal Brace Rehabilitation Protocol

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Diagnosis: UCL tear

ROM Restrictions: 0-120 PROM by week 4

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

Precautions: Avoid valgus stress during daily activity (i.e. closing a door, pulling an object to you from the side)

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 locked at 90°
- Brace should be worn at all times including exercise. Can remove for hygiene only.
 - Brace may be unlocked (range 0-120°) for physical therapy and hourly ROM at home
- Continue wrist and shoulder ROM
- Re-establish elbow passive ROM to 0-120 by post op week 4. Emphasize terminal extension.
- Initiate Thrower's Ten exercise program by week 3
- Scapular and light isotonic strengthening
- No lifting
- Desensitization and scar massage as soon as sutures are removed
- Teach home exercises to be done three to five times daily for ROM

Phase III: Weeks 4-8

- Progress ROM to 0-145 degrees
- Brace discontinued at 6 weeks
- Progress to Advanced Thrower's Ten program
- Progress elbow and wrist strengthening exercises once motion achieved

Phase IV: Weeks 8-10

- Progress to one-hand plyometrics and prone planks by week 8
- Plyometrics program (1 and 2 hand) and side planks by week 9
- Seated machine bench press and interval hitting program by week 10
- Continue Advanced Thrower's Ten program

Phase V: Weeks 11-16

- Initiate Interval Throwing program week 11-12

- Long Toss program – Phase I
- Continue prior exercises

Phase VI: Weeks 16-20

- Initiate Interval Throwing program – Phase 2
- Initiate mound throwing when ready and completed ITP – Phase I
- Return to sport no sooner than 5 months, typically 8 months
- Criteria for return to sport:
 - Trunk, scapula, shoulder and arm muscle strength/balance have returned to normal
 - No pain while throwing
 - Throwing balance, rhythm and coordination have been reestablished