Ulnar Collateral Ligament (UCL) Non-Operative Rehabilitation Protocol

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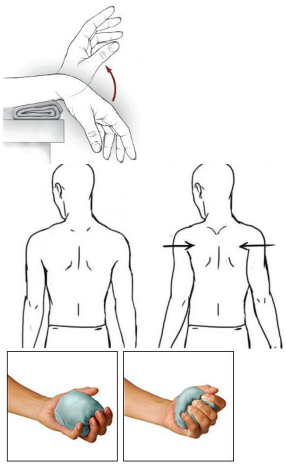
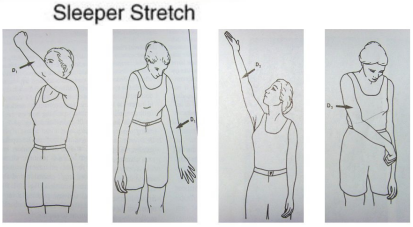
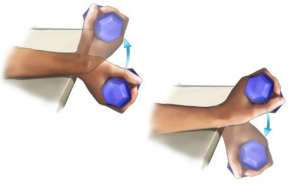
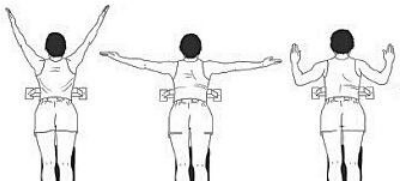
Sprains or Partial UCL Tears

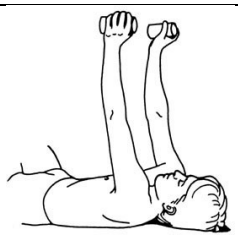
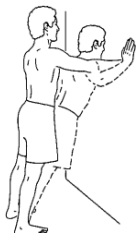
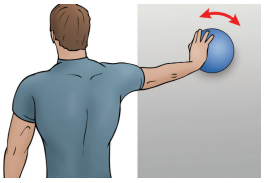
Hinged elbow brace for first 6 weeks to protect healing tissue. Restore ROM while wearing brace during this time.

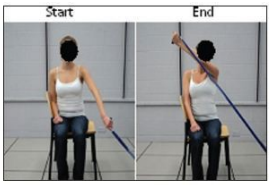
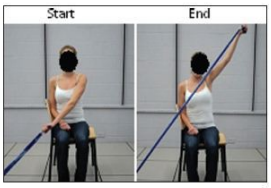
Week 0-3	NSAIDs, Ice, Compression, E-stim for pain modulation and inflammation ROM- Limit between 10-100° (pain free ROM) • Elbow PROM, AROM and AAROM in brace • Shoulder ROM ○ NO ER stretching • Wrist flexion/extension Strengthening • Lower extremity & core • Periscapular activation • Shoulder isometrics – **NO IR strengthening** to limit stress on medial elbow (load above elbow) • Wrist isometrics • Grip strengthening	
Week 3-4	Use NSAIDs, Ice, Compression and E-stim as necessary for pain modulation Begin to increase elbow ROM 5-10° per week in brace within a pain free range (10-115°) • Active shoulder and elbow ROM (table slides) • Pronation/supination – no pain • Wrist stretching Strengthening • Lower extremity, core, scapula control and stabilization	

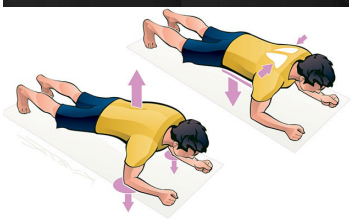
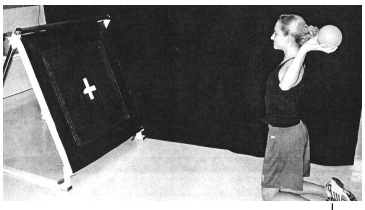
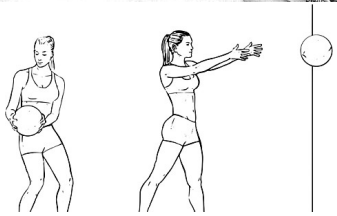
	• Shoulder rotator cuff isometrics • Isometric elbow and wrist flexion/extension • Continue grip strength	

Week 4-5	Goal: Gradually continue increasing elbow ROM (5-125°)
	
	Stretching
	• Restore ulnar deviation
	• Shoulder and wrist stretching
	• Low-load, long-duration stretch into elbow extension with light resistance.
	
	Strengthening (must resolve pain and inflammation prior to elbow strengthening)
	• Lower extremity, core and balance
	• Scapular control with low level arm elevation
	• Shoulder strengthening progression
	  ○ D1/D2 patterns
	• Initiate isotonic exercises concentrically and eccentrically
	  ○ Wrist curls
	  ○ Pronation/supination
	  ○ Biceps/triceps
	
	Shoulder rhythmic stabilization
		
		Sleeper Stretch
		 
		 
		 

Week 5-6	Goal: Achieve full ROM by end of week 6 (0°-135/145°) Full shoulder and elbow ROM Continue strengthening lower extremity, core and scapular muscles. Work on single leg balance Plyometrics • Two handed below chest plyoball toss • Double and single leg balance	 

Week 6-7	Goal: Actively stressing the UCL Maintain ROM with continual stretching, no varus or valgus stress on the elbow Lower extremity and core strengthening Continue to work on balance Early Closed Kinetic Chain exercises against wall Scapular strengthening with longer lever arm • Supine serratus anterior punches • Upright wall push up • Wall ball rolls	  

Week 7-8	Goal: Initiate Thrower's Ten Program
	
	Strengthening
	• Lower extremity, core, and scapula
	• Shoulder advanced exercises
	  ○ 90/90 activation
	  ○ PNF - D1/D2 resistance
	• Wrist and forearm
	
	Plyometrics
	• Side toss seated with truck rotation
	• Continuous ball drops at 90° ABD for pronator mass endurance
	
	Rhythmic stabilizations at 90/90
		
		 
		Figure 1. *D1 Flexion with Elastic Resistance.*
		 
		Figure 2. *D2 Flexion with Elastic Resistance.*
		 

Week 9-12	Goal: Strengthen most muscle groups by week 12
	
	Strengthening
	• Continue to strengthen kinetic chain
	  ○ Core and scapula
	• Elbow strengthening
	  ○ flexion/extension
	  ○ pronation/supination
	
	PNF patterns with body blade
	
	Progressing CKC – elbow to hand push-ups
	
	Plyometrics
	• Plyoball with mini tramp
	  ○ Begin with two-hand plyos
	  ○ Progress to one-hand
	  ▪ Start 0° abduction, progress to 90° over time
	
	• Plyometric wall throws with trunk rotation
	  ○ Emphasize core control and strength
		
		 
		 
		 

CRITERIA FOR RETURN TO PLAY	• Full pain free elbow ROM and strength ○ Pronation (flexor pronator mass), supination, extension, and flexion • Can demonstrate good throwing mechanics for particular sport	
Week 12+	**Initiate Interval Throwing Program** Continue throwers 10 exercise and Plyometrics	

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