

Distal Biceps Tendon Repair Rehabilitation Protocol

Phase	Goals	Precautions/Restrictions	Treatment
Weeks 0-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect surgical site • Decrease pain and inflammation • PRICE principles • Maintain integrity of repair • Full pain-free motion • Improve scapular mechanics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No lifting of any object • No elbow motion weeks 0-2. Remain in splint during that time. • Keep splint/dressings clean and dry • Wear sling with splint 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weeks 0-2: Active range of motion of shoulder, wrist and hand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gripping exercises with ball ○ Ok for use of smartphone and typing on computer • Scapular retraction • Week 2: Splint off. Initiate elbow passive range of motion to include: flexion, extension, forearm rotation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Progress to AAROM and active motions as tolerated ○ Wean out of sling as able • Cryotherapy: 5-7 times per day • Cardiovascular fitness with sling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Treadmill walking, elliptical without arm use, stationary bike • Initial visit: FOTO, QuickDASH
Weeks 6-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of proper scapulothoracic mechanics • Initiation of UE strengthening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sling discontinued by week 6 (or earlier if able) • 5 lb lifting restriction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 6: Initiate isometric triceps strengthening • Week 8: Initiate isotonic triceps, wrist flexion/extension, and shoulder strengthening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Open and closed kinetic chain positions ○ No biceps strengthening • Continue with cardiovascular fitness • Modalities as needed • Week 6: FOTO, QuickDASH
Weeks 12-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase functional UE strength 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradually increase lifting loads focusing on form, control, and tissue tolerance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 12: Initiate isometric biceps and progress to isotonic as able • Continuation cuff/scapular strengthening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Open and closed kinetic chain • Cardiovascular fitness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Treadmill, elliptical with arm use • Week 12: FOTO, QuickDASH
Weeks 16+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strength within 10% contralateral UE • Pain-free participation in activity and sport-related movement patterns, work, recreational activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on form and control during exercise performance • Use of appropriate work rest intervals • Assess tolerance to activity during, after and at 24 hours after activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 16: Progress biceps strengthening • Week 16: FOTO, QuickDASH • Week 16: HHD testing (per MD) • Sport specific activities including multiplanar activities

This protocol is not meant to be prescriptive but a recommendation to guide the rehabilitation process. Each patient's progress may vary based on specifics of their injury and procedure.