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Physical Therapy following Elbow Arthroscopy

The following is a basic framework from which to work during rehabilitation following elbow arthroscopy. Physical therapists may employ specific exercises at their discretion within these guidelines. We encourage patients and therapists to communicate with Dr. Brusalis and his staff with any questions.

Please provide with a home exercise program to be perform throughout rehabilitation.

Timeline	Guidelines
Days 1-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid excessive and/or aggressive motion for first five days unless specified by Dr. Brusalis • Begin gently moving elbow in bulky dressing • Remove bulky dressing and replace with gauze pads • Immediate post-op hand & wrist ROM, gripping exercises <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grip strengthening Wrist flexor stretching Wrist extensor stretching Elevate hand to reduce swelling
Days 5-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROM and AAROM elbow extension and flexion (motion to tolerance) • Begin PRE exercises with 1-lb weight <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wrist curls Reverse wrist curls Neutral wrist curls Pronation/supination Active elbow flexion & extension (frequent motion ~5 min every hour)
Weeks 2-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize elbow ROM and restoring full ROM • Begin light overpressure program into extension • Perform AAROM & PROM Full PROM at end of week 3 • Begin shoulder program week 2 • Thrower’s Ten Program week 3 • Running program may begin week 4
Weeks 5-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue all exercises above • Emphasis on restoration of full ROM • If lacking full extension – low load long duration (LLLD) stretching • Continue AAROM program for articular cartilage healing • Pool program – light exercises in water (once incisions close)

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Timeline	Guidelines
Weeks 6-9	<p><u>Goals:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect articular cartilage healing • Restore/maintain full range of motion • Shoulder range of motion and strengthening <p><u>Instructions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue AAROM & PROM exercises for elbow • Initiate resistance for biceps & triceps • Continue Thrower's Ten Program • Stretching & ROM program for shoulder • Continue ROM exercises for elbow • Core strengthening program • Still maintain precautions regarding loading of the elbow • Begin 2 handed plyometric program (chest pass, soccer throw, side to side) week 8
Weeks 10-12	<p><u>Goals:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate shoulder endurance program • Begin interval throwing program • Improve lower extremity strength/core strengthening <p><u>Instructions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue AAROM & PROM exercises • Advanced Thrower's Ten Program initiation • Running, agility drills, core program • Initiate interval sport program • Continue Advanced Thrower's Ten Program • Continue stretching & flexibility exercises of elbow & shoulder • Initiate 1 hand plyometric drills at week 1 hand throws; 1 hand wall dribbles
Weeks 12+	<p><u>Goals:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradual return to activity/sport • Prepare patient for safe and successful return to sports <p><u>Criteria to progress to Advanced Phase:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full nonpainful ROM • No pain or tenderness in elbow/shoulder • Isokinetic test that fulfills criteria to throw • Satisfactory clinical exam • Successful completion of modified throwing program (physician/physical therapist directed)