POSTOPERATIVE PROTOCOL

**DISTAL BICEPS TENDON REPAIR- THERAPIST INFORMATION**

* Routine Biceps tendon repair involves reapposition of the tendon to the radial tuberosity either through bone tunnel or using bone anchors.
* It takes about 3 months for the tendon to heal, in this period it is essential to avoid heavy loading of the tendon.
* Rarely, in cases of late presentation a reconstruction using allograft may be necessary. Please refer to op note to confirm, the same protocol can be used but stage 2 and 3 are delayed by 2 weeks each.

**AIMS OF PHYSIOTHERAPY**

* Prevent secondary shoulder stiffness
* Regain Elbow ROM as soon as practicable.
* Restore biceps muscle strength.
* Return to sports

!st Phase: Weeks 1-2

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| **Aims** | **Treatment Guidelines** |
| **Minimise pain & swelling** | * Analgesia - usually codeine and Paracetamol should suffice
* Do not remove the backslab or locked brace for the first 2 weeks
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| **Protection of Repair** | * Brace locked 90 degrees at rest
 |
| **Maintain ROM other joints** | * Active shoulder, wrist and hand exercises as tolerated.
 |
| **Function** | * Use collar and cuff to rest the elbow between exercise sessions.
* Ice application as required.
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| **Other** | * Consultant review and remove stitches at 2 weeks
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2nd Phase: Weeks 2-4

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| **Aims** | **Treatment Guidelines** |
| **Minimise pain & swelling** | * Analgesia
* Ice
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| **Protection of Repair**  | * Brace can be unlocked after 2 weeks to allow 30-130 degree ROM
* Active elbow extension, but only passive flexion allowed in this period. upto 25 repetitions 4-6 times a day.
* Sling removed but continue brace (fully unlocked after 3 weeks)
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| **Increase ROM** | * Aim for full ROM by 6 weeks
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3rd Phase: 4-6 weeks

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| **Aims** | **Treatment Guidelines** |
| **Increase ROM** | * Gradually increase range of movement to allow full passive flexion and extension locked to 20 degrees for 5th week.
* Unlock the brace to allow full ROM after 5 weeks
* Full pro-supination in pain free range
 |
| **Increase muscle control** | * Grip strengthening in neutral position
* Shoulder strengthening
 |
| **Proprioception** | * Scar massaging
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4th Phase: 6-12 weeks

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| **Aims** | **Treatment Guidelines** |
| **Increase ROM** | * Remove brace and allow full range of movement
* Passive elbow extension if needed
 |
| **Increase muscle strength** | * Shoulder strengthening
* Light elbow strengthening starting with 2lb weights, increasing by 2.5lb per week as tolerated
 |

Return to Functional Activities

Following timelines are the earliest for these activities to be commenced. Of course the times are approximate and will vary with individuals.

* **Using computer** 2 weeks
* **Driving** 6-8 weeks
* **Gym**  8 weeks for light exercises, at least 12 weeks for strengthening
* **Swimming** Breaststroke – 10 - 12 weeks

 Freestyle - after 3 months

* **Golf** 4-6 months
* **Contact sports** 6 months onwards
* **Return to work** Dependent upon the patient’s occupation. Patient’s in sedentary jobs may return at 4 weeks but heavy manual labour will need 12 weeks.