

Rehabilitation Protocol: Elbow Arthroscopy with Microfracture

Phase I: 0-1 weeks

- Brace: splint at 90 degrees & neutral rotation x3 days, then remove splint and begin light elbow ROM
- ROM:
 - Days 0-3: No elbow ROM; okay for gentle shoulder, wrist, digit ROM
 - Days 3-7: begin gentle elbow ROM at home in bulky dressing, sling when resting
- Weightbearing: Non-weightbearing
- Strengthening: None

Phase II: 1-4 weeks

- Brace: Hinged elbow brace. Wear at all times including for exercise. Okay to remove for hygiene
- ROM: 0-90 of elbow
 - > Continue wrist and shoulder ROM
- Weightbearing: Non-weightbearing
- Strengthening: none of elbow
- Exercises:
 - > Gentle joint mobilization, focus on re-gaining extension
 - > Emphasis on frequent motion of the elbow
 - > Gripping exercises with putty
 - > Isometrics, wrist extension-flexion exercises and stretches
 - > After week 2, initial shoulder cuff and deltoid isometrics;
 - > Initiate light wrist strengthening with 1 lb weight (curls, reverse curls, pronation/supination)

Phase III: 4-8 weeks

- Brace: None
- ROM: progress to full; frequent mobility exercises of elbow
 - > Continue wrist and shoulder ROM
- Weightbearing: Non-weightbearing
- Strengthening:
- Exercises:
 - > Initiate light dumbbell program for wrist flexors, extensors, supinators, pronators, biceps, triceps
 - > Low load long duration stretching for extension
 - > May begin running
 - > Thrower's 10 program once ROM full with very light loading; no push-ups

Phase IV: 8-12 weeks

- Brace: none
- ROM: full and pain free ROM
- Weightbearing: limited
- Strengthening: begin biceps isometrics; then begin active flexion and extension against gravity; resistive strengthening for deltoid/rotator cuff
- Exercises:

- > Core strengthening
- > Light resistance for biceps and triceps

Phase V:
12 weeks-
5 months

- Brace: none
- ROM: full
- Weightbearing: gradually increase slowly
- Strengthening:
 - > Shoulder program
 - > Core program
 - > Progress elbow strengthening but protect against excessive joint loading for 5 months (eg, no weight bearing exercises, bench press, etc.)

Phase VI:
5+ months

- Brace: none
- ROM: full
- Weightbearing: as tolerated
- Activity: goal to return to full activity
 - > Initiate light plyometrics and tossing
 - > Initiate interval throwing program phase I at 6 months
 - > Start light machine bench press and push-ups after 6 months
 - > Initiate interval throwing program phase II off mound after 7 months
 - > Progress functional activities and sport-specific demands
- Return to sport after clearance by MD (typically minimum 6 months or more depending on sport)