

PHYSICAL THERAPY PROTOCOL

Distal Triceps Tendon Repair

Repair of the distal triceps tendon to the olecranon

The triceps has been reattached to the olecranon. Early care protects the repair by limiting elbow flexion (which stretches the repair) and avoiding resisted elbow extension. Flexion is advanced gradually, often in a hinged brace.

General Precautions

- Hinged elbow brace; flexion limited early and advanced gradually.
- No resisted elbow extension for 6-8 weeks.
- No weight bearing through the arm or lifting until cleared.
- Avoid forceful passive flexion.

Phase I — Protection Weeks 0-2

Goals

- Protect the repair
- Control pain and swelling
- Begin protected motion

Precautions / Restrictions

- Brace limiting flexion (near extension early)
- No active/resisted extension
- No weight bearing through arm

Exercises & Interventions

- Active-assisted elbow motion within brace limits
- Forearm rotation (unresisted)
- Shoulder/wrist/hand motion
- Edema control / elevation
- Cryotherapy

Criteria to Advance

- Wound healing
- Comfortable within allowed range

Phase II — Progressive Motion Weeks 2-6

Goals

- Gradually restore full flexion
- Restore active motion

Precautions / Restrictions

- Advance flexion per brace schedule
- No resisted extension

Exercises & Interventions

- Progress flexion gradually to full

- Active elbow and forearm motion (unresisted)
- Scar management

Criteria to Advance

- Approaching full flexion
- Full active extension (unresisted)

Phase III — Strengthening Weeks 6-12

Goals

- Restore full motion
- Begin strengthening

Precautions / Restrictions

- Begin light resisted extension ~6-8 weeks, progress gradually

Exercises & Interventions

- Progressive triceps (extension) strengthening
- Grip and forearm strengthening
- Endurance work

Criteria to Advance

- Full motion
- Strength improving

Phase IV — Return to Activity Months 3-5

Goals

- Return to full activity and sport

Exercises & Interventions

- Advanced strengthening
- Sport-/job-specific progression

Criteria to Advance

- Symmetric strength
- Return to heavy lifting/sport typically ~4-5 months

This protocol is a general guideline. Progression is criteria-based and may be advanced or slowed by Dr. O'Donnell based on intraoperative findings, tissue quality, fixation, and individual healing. Time frames are approximate. Direct questions to the office at (305) 393-8810.