

Elbow Fracture ORIF Rehabilitation Protocol ***(distal humerus, olecranon, radial head)***

- **Weeks 0-2**
 - Most often the patient will be in a splint and sling until first post-op visit. If not, then proceed with plan below
- **Weeks 2-6**
 - Goals: prevent stiffness, decrease swelling/inflammation, and protect fixation
 - Depending on fracture, patient, and insurance, a hinged elbow brace may be used after removal of the splint
 - Start passive, active-assisted, and active elbow and wrist flexion/extension exercises and forearm pronation/supination exercises.
 - For olecranon fractures and osteotomies - no active extension until week 6; no resisted extension until week 12
 - Grip strengthening and full ROM of wrist and digits
 - Full ROM of shoulder; prevent stiffness from thumb to shoulder outside of the elbow
 - Modalities as needed for muscle stimulation, pain control, and edema control
 - No lifting heavier than a cup of coffee/glass of water; okay to use write, use keyboard, button shirt, etc.
 - If limitation in ROM is significant at 6 weeks (flexion <90 degrees or extensor lag >30 degrees) may consider progressive dynamic splinting. *Please notify surgeon to obtain prescription
- **Weeks 6-12**
 - Goals: improved swelling and pain, increase ROM, begin strengthening
 - Start manual upper extremity PNF exercises
 - Emphasize ROM and isometric exercises
 - Progress to early resistance exercises
 - Isokinetic program to start at week 8-9
 - Stretching and neuromuscular control exercises
 - No lifting heavier than 5-10lbs
 - Modalities as needed for muscle stimulation, pain control, and edema control
- **Weeks: 12+**
 - Goals: increase strength, return to work, sport and/or pre-injury functional level with minimal to no restrictions
 - Modify/progress muscular strengthening and conditioning
 - Work or sport specific strengthening
 - Work on improving functional/ADL tasks as needed
 - No lifting restriction, but increase weight gradually
 - Customized HEP to continue once PT/OT is completed



Physical therapy protocols, post-operative instructions, and other information can all be accessed at any time at www.frantzorthopedics.com