

## UCL RECONSTRUCTION (TOMMY JOHN SURGERY) - REHAB PROTOCOL

### I. IMMEDIATE POST-OPERATIVE PHASE (0-3 weeks)

Goals: Protect healing tissue  
Decrease pain/inflammation  
Retard muscular atrophy  
Protect graft site – allow healing

#### A. Post-Operative Week 1

**Brace:** Posterior splint at 90 degrees elbow flexion

**Range of Motion:** Wrist AROM ext/flexion immediately postoperative  
\*\*\*Encourage immediate knee ROM day 1 if gracilis graft

Elbow postoperative compression dressing (5-7 days)  
Wrist (graft site) compression dressing 7-10 days as needed

**Exercises:** Gripping exercises  
Wrist ROM  
Shoulder isometrics (No Shoulder ER)  
Biceps isometrics

**Cryotherapy:** To elbow joint and to graft site at wrist or below knee  
\*\*\*If gracilis graft, can use one crutch as needed for first few days

#### B. Post-Operative Week 2

**Brace:** Full Elbow ROM- May adjust brace per patient's tolerance  
- Motion to tolerance

**Exercises:** Continue all exercises listed above  
Elbow Range of Motion in brace to tolerance  
Initiate elbow extension isometrics  
Continue wrist ROM exercises  
Initiate light scar mobilization over distal incision (graft)

**Cryotherapy:** Continue ice to elbow and graft site

#### C. Post-Operative Week 3

**Brace:** Continue use during the day and with sleeping  
-Motion to tolerance (Elbow ROM 15-115 degrees)

**Exercises:** Continue all exercises listed above  
Elbow ROM in brace  
Initiate active ROM Wrist and Elbow (No resistance)  
Initiate light wrist flexion stretching  
Initiate active ROM shoulder;  
-Full can  
-Lateral raises  
-ER/IR tubing  
-Elbow flex/extension  
Initiate light scapular strengthening exercises  
May incorporate bicycle for lower extremity strength & endurance



Physical therapy protocols, post-operative instructions, and other information can all be accessed at any time at [www.frantzorthopedics.com](http://www.frantzorthopedics.com)

**II. INTERMEDIATE PHASE (Week 4-7)**

Goals: Gradual increase to full ROM  
Promote healing of repaired tissue  
Regain and improve muscular strength  
Restore full function of graft site

**A. Week 4**

Brace: Elbow ROM 0-125 degrees  
-Motion to tolerance  
-Wear with daily activities and at night

Exercises: Begin light resistance exercises for arm (1 lb)  
- Wrist curls, extensions, pronation, supination  
- Elbow extension/flexion  
- Shoulder program emphasize rotator cuff and scapular strengthening  
Initiate shoulder strengthening with light dumbbells  
Isometrics for hamstrings and calf muscles

**B. Week 5**

ROM: Elbow ROM 0-135 degrees  
Discontinue brace  
Maintain full ROM

Continue all Exercises: Progress all shoulder and UE exercises (progress weight 1 lb.)

**C. Week 6**

AROM: 0-145 degrees or full ROM

Exercises: Initiate Thrower's Ten Program  
Progress elbow strengthening exercises  
Initiate shoulder external rotation strengthening  
Progress shoulder program

**D. Week 7**

Progress Thrower's Ten Program (progress weights)  
Initiate PNF diagonal patterns (light)

**III. ADVANCED STRENGTHENING PHASE (Week 8-14)**

Goals: Increase strength, power, endurance  
Maintain full elbow ROM  
Gradually initiate sporting activities

**A. Week 8-10**

Exercises: Initiate eccentric elbow flexion/extension  
Continue isotonic program: forearm & wrist  
Continue shoulder program – Thrower's Ten Program  
Manual resistance diagonal patterns  
Initiate plyometric exercise program  
(2 hand plyos close to body only)  
-Chest pass  
-Side throw close to body  
Continue stretching calf and hamstrings



**B. Week 10**

Exercises: Continue all exercises listed above  
Program plyometrics to 2 hand drills away from body  
-Side to side throws  
-Soccer throws  
-Side throws

**C. Week 12-14**

Continue all exercises  
Initiate isotonic machines strengthening exercises (if desired)  
-Bench press (seated)  
-Lat pull down  
Initiate golf, swimming  
Initiate interval hitting program

**IV. RETURN TO ACTIVITY PHASE (Week 14-32)**

Goals: Continue to increase strength, power, and endurance of upper extremity musculature  
Gradual return to sport activities

**A. Week 14**

Exercises: Continue strengthening program  
Emphasis on elbow and wrist strengthening and flexibility exercises  
Maintain full elbow ROM  
Initiate one hand plyometric throwing (stationary throws)  
Initiate one hand wall dribble  
Initiate one hand baseball throws into wall

**B. Week 16**

Exercises: Initiate interval throwing program (Phase I) [long toss program]  
Continue Thrower's Ten Program and plyos  
Continue to stretch before and after throwing

**C. Week 24-26**

Exercises: Progress to Phase II throwing (once successfully completed Phase I)

**D. Month 6 onward**

Exercises: Gradually progress to competitive throwing/sports

\* Protocol taken and adapted from Andrews Sports Medicine and the American Sports Medicine Institute

