



OLECRANON OPEN REDUCTION INTERNAL FIXATION (ORIF) Physical Therapy Protocol

Patient Name: _____ Date of Surgery: _____

Procedure: Right / Left Elbow Olecranon ORIF

_____ Evaluate and Treat

_____ Provide patient with home program

Frequency: _____ x/week x _____ weeks

_____ **Phase I (0-4 weeks):** *Period of protection: splint/brace should be worn at all times during this phase (except for hygiene and PT). No active elbow extension. Therapists may slowly advance elbow flexion (and corresponding brace setting) within a tension-free zone. D/C brace after 4 weeks.*

• **Weeks 0-1: No formal PT. Splint without motion:**

- Splint/brace used to immobilize elbow at roughly 45 degrees.
- Home exercises only (gentle wrist and shoulder ROM).

• **Weeks 1-6: Begin formal PT. Brace with careful progressive motion:**

- Brace unlocked to allow ROM from full extension to ___ degrees of flexion. Flexion setting may be increased slowly (ie. roughly 10° per week) to match whatever passive, **tension-free** extension is achieved during therapy sessions (see below). Brace should be worn at all times (except for hygiene or PT).
- **ROM:** Flexion: active and gentle passive elbow flexion to ___ degrees, advancing as tolerated to a **tension-free endpoint**. Therapists may slowly increase the flexion block setting on the brace to match the tension-free flexion achieved during therapy sessions (ie. if elbow can be passively flexed to 70° without tension, brace may be reset to 70° flexion block after that therapy session). Extension: **passive-only** extension to tolerance (**NO active extension**). Passive forearm supination/pronation. Continue shoulder/wrist ROM.
 - Goal: full elbow extension, tension-free flexion to 120°, and full forearm supination/pronation by 6 weeks.
- **Strengthening:** Cuff/periscapular/forearm isometrics in brace, within above motion limits.

_____ **Phase II (6-12 weeks):** *Motion is more aggressively advanced. Still no resisted elbow extension or lifting with the operative arm.*

- Discontinue brace.
- **ROM:** Advance active and passive elbow flexion to full (if not already achieved). Gentle passive stretching at end-ranges as tolerated. Begin gentle active elbow extension (gravity only). Continue forearm supination/pronation, shoulder and wrist ROM. Goal: full, tension-free elbow and forearm motion by 9 weeks.
- **Strengthening:**
 - *Avoid resisted elbow extension until 3 months post-op.*
 - Progress cuff/periscapular and forearm isometrics → bands. Only do 3x/week to avoid cuff tendonitis.
 - Modalities as per PT discretion

_____ **Phase III (3-6 months):** *Begin resisted elbow extension and progress to sport/occupation-specific rehab.*

- **ROM:** Unrestricted active and passive stretching at end ranges as tolerated.
- **Strengthening/Activities:**
 - Continue bands, progressing to light weights (1-5 lbs), 3x/week.
 - Begin gentle resisted elbow extension and transition to closed chain upper extremity/forearm strengthening within pain-free limits.
 - Progress to sport-specific/job-specific exercises at 4.5 months.
 - Depending on job requirements, may resume lifting once full-strength achieved and healing adequate (usually by 6 months).

By signing this referral, I certify that I have examined this patient and physical therapy is medically necessary.

This patient _____ would _____ would not benefit from social services.

Physician Name: _____ Date: _____