

POST-OPERATIVE REHABILITATION: DISTAL HUMERUS FRACTURE FIXATION

Therapy Plan: Twice per week for 0-3 months, once per week for 3-6 months

ROM Progression

Initial ROM weeks 2-6:

- Elbow motion - gentle passive motion (flexion/extension, pronation/supination)
- Wrist and hand passive and active motion as tolerated

Wean out of the sling over weeks 6-8 with the goal of being completely out of the sling at 8 weeks.

Progress passive and active ROM after 6 weeks as tolerated with the goal of full motion at 10-12 weeks.

Weight Bearing Progression

No strengthening for postoperative weeks 0-12 with progressive strengthening after week 12.

Initial Post-Operative Physical Therapy Visit (2 weeks)

- Instruct on ROM exercises as above
- Gentle passive motion, manual therapy
- Isometric exercises for core

Phase 1 Physical Therapy (2-6 weeks): protect the fixation, progress motion

- NO open-chain exercises
- Manual therapy 20+ minutes per session
- Gentle ROM as tolerated as above
- Soft tissue mobilization, isometric exercises, core strengthening

Phase 2 Physical Therapy (6-12 weeks): progressive motion

- Wean out of brace
- Progress to full active ROM as tolerated as above
- Proprioceptive training
- Soft tissue mobilization, isometric exercises, core strengthening

Phase 3 Physical Therapy (12-18 weeks): progressive strengthening

- Progress to full ROM if not already obtained
- Initiate closed-chain and core strengthening
- Continue proprioceptive training
- Focus on functional exercises in all planes, advance only when fully controlled

Phase 4 Physical Therapy (18-24 weeks): return to pre-injury level and sport

- Advance closed-chain and core strengthening
- Sport-specific drills as tolerated
- Full return may take 4-6 months or more depending on surgery and recovery