**Distal Biceps Tendon Repair**

**Phase I: 1-3 weeks**

Clinical Goals

* Elbow ROM from 40º of extension to full flexion (this may vary depending on patient’s situation.). Advance extension to 30º on week 2.
* Maintain minimal swelling and soft tissue healing
* Achieve full forearm supination/pronation

Testing

* Bilateral elbow and forearm ROM

Exercises

* Six times per day the patient should perform active assistive flexion and active extension exercises within the allowable range. Two sets of 10 are performed.
* Sub max pain-free isometrics of triceps and shoulder (Brigham and Women’s Hospital).
* Ice after exercise, 3-5 times per day
* A sling should be worn only as needed for comfort with the patient maintaining full shoulder ROM.

**Phase II: 3-6 Weeks**

Clinical Goals

* Full elbow and forearm ROM by 6 weeks
* Scar management

Testing

* Bilateral elbow and forearm ROM
* Grip strengthening at 5-6 weeks

Exercises

* 3 weeks:
	+ The extension limit in the brace is changed to 20º
	+ The brace stays on at all other times except when washing the arm.
	+ Sub max pain-free isometrics biceps with forearm in neutral (Brigham and Women’s Hospital).
* Scar massage 3-4 times per day.
* 4 weeks:
	+ Extension limit is changed to 10º.
	+ Continue the same exercises.
	+ Single plane AROM flexion, extension, pronation and supination (Brigham and Women’s Hospital).
	+ Soft sponge ball may be used 3 times per day for 10 minutes to improve grip strength.
* 5 weeks:
	+ The extension limit is changed to 0º and exercises are continued in the brace.
* 6 weeks:
	+ The brace is discontinued, unless needed for protection.
	+ Passive elbow extension exercises are initiated if needed.
	+ Light strengthening exercises are initiated with light tubing or 2-3 pound weights for elbow flexion, extension, forearm rotation and wrist flexion and extension.
	+ Ice is continued after strengthening exercises.

Clinical Follow-up

* The patient usually is seen at 3 weeks and at 5-6 weeks, then only as needed with doctor appointments, until full motion is achieved and to monitor the patient's strengthening program.

**Phase III: 6 Weeks to 6 Months**

Clinical Goals

* The strengthening program is gradual.
	+ No lifting > 25lbs for 4 months
	+ No lifting > 60lbs for 6 months
	+ No contact sports for 6 months.

Testing

* Grip strengthening
* Elbow ROM

Exercises

* Elbow ROM exercises are performed if ROM is not WNL
* Strengthening exercises to wrist, elbow, forearm, and possibly shoulder depending on sport and/or work requirements

Clinical Follow-up

* The patient is seen only as needed, usually with doctor appointments, to monitor progress with strengthening program.