



Non-Operative Elbow Dislocation Rehabilitation Protocol

Expected return to work:

- Sedentary/Cognitive: 1-2 weeks
- Light Manual: 4-6 weeks
- Heavy Manual: 8-10 weeks

PHASE I, Surgery to 6 weeks Post-Op

Goals:

- Protect healing joint
- Decrease joint effusion and soft tissue edema
- Decrease pain
- Active elbow flexion goal: 115 degrees
- Active elbow extension goal: 10 degrees short of extension

Precautions:

- No lifting, pushing, and pulling

Brace:

- Progress elbow brace as outlined by medical provider

PROM/AAROM:

- No limitation with elbow flexion range of motion. Gradually progress to full elbow extension.
- No aggressive stretching into elbow extension.
- Pronation/supination as tolerated.
- Wrist and Hand: range of motion and tolerated

Strengthening:

- Light putty exercises to maintain grip
- Scapulothoracic strengthening
- Isometrics in neutral position

Treatment Interventions:

- Sub max isometrics of the triceps, biceps, and brachialis while at neutral position: These muscles enhance the compressive forces of the humeroulnar joint reducing the humeroulnar sag (Amis Dowson, and Wright, 1980).
- Elbow forearm active ROM exercises in an overhead manner while supine: Patient shoulder lying on back with shoulder flexed to 90 degrees. This position reduced the



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gravitational forces distracting the humeroulnar joint and enhances joint tracking during flexion and extension of the elbow (Wolfe & Hotchkins, 2006)

Modalities

- As needed including electrical stimulation, ultrasound, hot pack, and cold pack

PHASE II, 6-12 weeks

Goals:

- 5/5 strength with elbow flexion and extension
- Elbow flexion goal: 135 degrees
- Elbow extension: 0 degrees extension

Brace:

- Discontinue based on provider restrictions

ROM:

- AROM/PROM: no restrictions

Precautions:

- Lifting restriction may be lifted or increased as directed by referring medical provider

Strengthening

- Elbow flexion isotonic strengthening
- Triceps extension isotonic strengthening
- Pronation/Supination isotonic strengthening

As Needed

- Scapulothoracic strengthening
- Rotator cuff strengthening

Treatment interventions:

- Wrist/Hand exercises
- Gripping exercises
- Wall pushups progressing to standard push up
- Bicep curls
- Triceps extensions
- Pushing, pulling, and functional lifting based on job and home requirements

PHASE III, 12 weeks +

Goals:

- Functional strengthening