Distal Biceps Tendon Repair Rehabilitation Protocol

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This protocol provides general guidelines for rehabilitation following distal biceps tendon repair. Progression should be individualized based on the procedure, healing, and patient response, with modifications as directed by the surgeon.

Phase	Goals	Precautions / Restrictions	Treatment

Weeks 0-6	• **Protect surgical site**
	• Decrease pain and inflammation
	• PRICE principles
	• **Maintain integrity of repair**
	• Full pain-free motion
	• Improve scapular mechanics
		• **No lifting of any object**
		• **No elbow motion weeks 0-2.** Remain in splint during that time.
		• Keep splint/dressings clean and dry
		• Wear sling with splint
			General guidelines
			• Scapular retraction
			• Cryotherapy: 5-7 times per day
			• Cardiovascular fitness with sling
			  • Treadmill walking, elliptical without arm use, stationary bike
			Initial visit
			• FOTO, QuickDASH
			Weeks 0-2
			• Active range of motion of shoulder, wrist and hand
			  • Gripping exercises with ball
			  • Ok for use of smartphone and typing on computer
			Week 2
			• Splint off. Initiate elbow passive range of motion to include: flexion, extension, forearm rotation
			  • Progress to AAROM and active motions as tolerated
			  • Wean out of sling as able

Weeks 6-12	• Maintenance of proper scapulothoracic mechanics
	• Initiation of UE strengthening
		• Sling discontinued by week 6 (or earlier if able)
		• **5 lb** lifting restriction
			General guidelines
			• Continue with cardiovascular fitness
			• Modalities as needed
			Week 6
			• Initiate isometric triceps strengthening
			• FOTO, QuickDASH
			Week 8
			• Initiate isotonic triceps, wrist flexion/extension, and shoulder strengthening
			  • Open and closed kinetic chain positions
			  • **No biceps strengthening**

Weeks 12-16	• Increase functional UE strength	• Gradually increase lifting loads focusing on form, control, and tissue tolerance	**General guidelines**
			• Continuation cuff/scapular strengthening
			  • Open and closed kinetic chain
			• Cardiovascular fitness
			  • Treadmill, elliptical with arm use

Phase	Goals	Precautions / Restrictions	Treatment
			Week 12 ● Initiate isometric biceps and progress to isotonics as able ● FOTO, QuickDASH
Weeks 16+	● Strength within **10%** contralateral UE ● Pain-free participation in activity and sport-related movement patterns, work, recreational activities	● Focus on form and control during exercise performance ● Use of appropriate work rest intervals ● Assess tolerance to activity during, after and at 24 hours after activity	**General guidelines** ● Sport specific activities including multiplanar activities **Week 16** ● Progress biceps strengthening ● FOTO, QuickDASH ● HHD testing (**per MD)**