

# Rehabilitation Protocol: Ulnar Collateral Ligament (UCL) Reconstruction

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Diagnosis: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Surgery: \_\_\_\_\_

## IMMEDIATE POSTOPERATIVE PHASE (Weeks 1-3)

- **Goals**
  - Protect graft and healing tissue
  - Decrease pain/inflammation
  - Prevent muscular atrophy
- **Week 1**
  - Brace: Posterior splint at 90° elbow flexion
  - Wrist AROM extension/flexion immediately
  - Knee ROM postoperative day 1
  - Gripping exercises
  - Wrist ROM
- **Week 2**
  - Brace: Elbow ROM 25 - 100° (Gradually increase 5° extension/ 10° flexion per week)
  - Continue all exercises listed above
  - Initiate elbow extension isometrics
  - Continue wrist ROM exercises
  - Initiate light scar mobilization over graft harvest incision
  - Cryotherapy to both elbow and graft harvest site
- **Week 3**
  - Brace: Elbow ROM 15 - 155°
  - Continue all exercises above
  - Elbow ROM in brace
  - Initiate active ROM of wrist and elbow (NO RESISTANCE)
  - Initiate active ROM shoulder
    - ER/IR tubing
    - Elbow flexion/extension
    - Lateral raises
  - Initiate light scapular strengthening exercises
  - Incorporate stationary bike for lower extremity

## INTERMEDIATE PHASE (Weeks 4-7)

- **Goals**
  - Gradual increase to full ROM
  - Promote healing of reconstructed tissue
  - Regain and improve muscle strength
  - Restore full function of graft

- **Week 4**
  - Brace: Elbow ROM 0 - 125°
  - Begin light resistance exercises for arm (1 lb)
    - Wrist curls, extension, pronation and supination
    - Elbow extension and flexion
  - Progress shoulder program emphasizing rotator cuff and scapular strengthening
  - Initiate shoulder strengthening with light dumbbells
- **Week 5**
  - Elbow ROM 0 - 135°
  - Discontinue brace
  - Continue all above exercises. Progress all shoulder and upper extremity exercises
- **Week 6**
  - AROM: 0 - 145° without brace
  - Progress elbow strengthening exercises
  - Initiate Thrower's Ten Program
  - Initiate shoulder external rotation strengthening
- **Week 7**
  - Progress Thrower's Ten Program (progress weight)
  - Initiate PNF diagonal patterns (light)

## **ADVANCED STRENGTHENING PHASE (Weeks 8-14)**

- **Goals**
  - Increase strength, power and endurance
  - Maintain full elbow ROM
  - Gradually initiate sporting activities
- **Week 8**
  - Initiate eccentric elbow flexion and extension
  - Continue isotonic program for forearm and wrist
  - Continue shoulder program – Thrower's Ten Program
  - Manual resistance diagonal patterns
  - Initiate plyometric exercise program (2 hand plyos close to body only)
    - Chest pass
    - Side throws close to body
  - Continue calf and hamstrings stretching
- **Week 10**
  - Continue all exercises listed above
  - Program plyometrics to 2 hand drills away from the body
    - Side to side throws
    - Soccer throws
    - Side throws
- **Weeks 12-14**
  - Continue all exercises
  - Initiate isotonic machines strengthening (if desired)
    - Bench press (seated)

- Lat pull down
- Initiate interval hitting program

### **RETURN TO ACTIVITY PHASE (Weeks 15-32)**

- **Goals**
  - Continue to increase strength, power and endurance of upper extremity musculature
  - Gradual return to sport activities
- **Week 15**
  - Continue strengthening program
  - Emphasis on elbow and wrist strengthening and flexibility exercises
  - Maintain full elbow ROM
  - Initiate one hand plyometric throwing (stationary throws)
  - Initiate one hand wall dribble
  - Initiate one hand baseball throws into wall
- **Week 16**
  - Initiate interval throwing program
  - Continue Thrower's Ten Program and plyos
  - Continue to stretch before and after throwing
- **Week 22-24**
  - Progress in throwing program
- **Week 30-32**
  - Gradually progress to competitive throwing/sports

**Comments:**

**Frequency: 2-3 times per week**

**Duration: 6-8 weeks**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_