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THERAPY PROTOCOL FOR ULNAR COLLATERAL LIGAMENT RECONSTRUCTION “TOMMY JOHN” SURGERY

Note: While this is intended to be a guide, please tailor progression to the patient’s surgical procedure and response to treatment. The diagnosis, the surgery performed, and the patient’s pre-operative level all play important roles in the post-operative period. This protocol is a general timeline, and some aspects can be accelerated or decelerated according to each individual situation. The protocol is NOT intended to be a comprehensive outline of all activities and restrictions.

This therapy protocol is intended for current patients of Dr. Hansen who are actively under his care. Dr. Hansen reserves the right to change all or part of this protocol based on individual patient progress. Please contact our office if you have questions or concerns.

Thank you for your care of our shared patient!

Frequency: 2-3 times per week for 12-16 weeks

General Information:

- Surgery may also include one or more of the following:
 - Palmaris longus autograft harvest
 - Hamstring autograft harvest
- Anticipate return to competitive throwing at 12 months postop

1) Phase 1: Weeks 0-2

Goals: Protect surgical repair

- a) Precautions
 - i) Patient will be placed in posterior splint during surgery which will be removed by surgeon at 5 days-2 weeks postop
 - ii) Hinged elbow brace for all activity once splint is removed
- b) Day of surgery:

- i) Gripping exercises

2) Phase 2: 2-3 Weeks

Goal: ROM advancement, achieve full elbow F/E/S/P by week 6

- a) Precautions
 - i) Exercises in hinged brace
- b) Weeks 2-4
 - i) PROM and AAROM of elbow
 - ii) AROM of shoulder
- c) Weeks 4-6
 - i) AROM of shoulder and elbow
 - ii) Strengthening exercises – wrist flexion/extension, supination/pronation
- d) Weeks 6-13
 - i) Wean use of hinged brace
 - ii) Continue AROM of shoulder and elbow
 - iii) Continue wrist and forearm strengthening
 - iv) Add elbow strengthening exercises
 - v) May begin wrist radial/ulnar deviation against resistance

3) Phase 3: Weeks 13-26

Goal: Early throwing motion

- a) Precautions
 - i) Avoid valgus stress to elbow and ballistic movement in terminal elbow ROM
- b) Weeks 13-22
 - i) Begin shoulder strengthening exercises with light resistance, emphasizing RC
 - ii) Start total body conditioning
 - iii) Begin easy tossing at 30 feet. Progress to 50 ft. No wind-up. 2-3 times per week, 10-15 minutes/session
- c) Weeks 22-24
 - i) Continue upper extremity strengthening exercises
 - ii) Continue easy tossing 50-60 feet. No wind-up. 2-3 times per week. 10-15 minutes per session
- d) Weeks 24-26
 - i) Add shoulder internal rotation exercise in sidelying position.
 - ii) Continue strengthening exercises and total body conditioning program
 - iii) Lob ball on alternate days, no more than 30 feet. 10-15 min per session

4) Phase 4: Weeks 26-35

Goals: Strengthening

- a) Precautions
 - i) Avoid sports/activities that risk re-injury of elbow

- b) Weeks 26-28
 - i) Lob with easy wind-up, 40-50 feet. 2-3 times per week. 15-20 minutes per session
- c) Weeks 28-30
 - i) Lob with occasional straight throw at 1/2 speed, 60 feet, 20-25 minutes per session, 2-3 times per week.
- d) Weeks 30-33
 - i) Increase throwing distance to 100 feet at 1/2 speed, 20-25 minutes per session, 2-3 times per week.
- e) Weeks 33-35
 - i) Long easy throws from 150 feet with ball back to home plate on 5-6 bounces, 20-25 minutes per session.
 - ii) Begin 12-day throwing cycle: throw 2 days/rest one day, repeat 4 times.

5) Phase 5: Weeks 35-52

Goals: Advance full throwing program

- a) Weeks 35-37
 - i) Outfielders: Increase throwing distance to 200-250 feet, with ball reaching home plate on numerous bounces, 20-25 min/session, 12-day throwing cycle
 - ii) Pitchers & Infielders: In and Out drill: begin throwing at 3/4 speed, gradually increasing the throwing distance until 150 feet. Gradually decrease throwing distance until reaching normal throwing position distance. Perform drill 30-35 minutes on 12-day throwing cycle.
- b) Weeks 37-40
 - i) Outfielders: Increase throwing distance to 300-350 feet, with ball reaching home plate on 1-2 bounces at 3/4 speed, 30-35 min/session, 12-day throwing cycle.
 - ii) Pitchers and Infielders: In and out drill: Gradually reduce time throwing "in and out" and increase throwing time from normal playing position, 3/4 speed, 30-35 min/session, 12-day throwing cycle.
- c) Weeks 40-43
 - i) Outfielders and Infielders: Short, crisp throws from 100-150 feet, 3/4 speed, 30 minutes, 12-day throwing cycle
 - ii) Pitchers: Throw batting practice at 3/4 speed, 30 minutes, 12-day throwing cycle.
- iii) Weeks 43-45
 - iv) All players: return to throwing from normal playing position, 3/4 speed with emphasis on technique and accuracy, 25-30 minu/session, 12-day throwing cycle.
- d) Weeks 45-47
 - i) All players: Continue throwing from normal playing position, 7/8 speed, gradually increase throwing time
- e) Weeks 47-52
 - i) All players: Simulate game day situation
 - ii) Pitchers: warm up with appropriate number of pitches and throw for an average number of innings, taking the usual rest breaks between innings.
 - iii) Repeat this simulation 2-4 times with a 3-4 day rest period in between.

[After Seto, et. al., JOSPT, September 1991]