Protocol E3
Physical or Occupational Therapy Protocol for
Common Extensor Origin Release and Partial Lateral Epicondylectomy

Phase I: Protection Phase (weeks 0-2)

GOALS:
- Minimize elbow pain and inflammation.
- Rest operated elbow and wrist.
- Avoid shoulder and/or finger stiffness.

ANCILLARY MEASURES:
- Long-arm posterior splint immobilizes operated elbow and wrist.
- Arm sling may be used for comfort during the day.
- Foam arm cradle may be used to support the splint at night.
- Pain medications are used as needed.

EXERCISES:
- **Finger Motion:** Begin finger motion in the recovery room. Continue to flex and extend fingers on the operated side for 5 minutes, 4-6 times per day.
- **Shoulder Active Range of Motion:** Begin progressive active shoulder forward flexion and abduction on the operated side. Progress to include shoulder extension, external rotation and internal rotation. Repeat 3 times per day, 10 repetitions.

PRECAUTIONS:
- Avoid finger swelling by keeping operated extremity elevated.
- Do not push off with splint.
- Protect splint from water by covering with plastic bag when bathing.
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Phase II: Motion Phase (weeks 3-6)

GOALS:
- Protect common extensor repair.
- Avoid elbow stiffness.

ANCILLARY MEASURES:
- Discontinue long-arm splint, sling and foam arm cradle.
- Use removable short-arm splint 23 hours/day during weeks 3 and 4. Remove the splint only for bathing.
- Use removable short-arm splint intermittently during daytime activities for weeks 5 and 6.
- Pain medications as needed.

EXERCISES:
- Continue exercises from Phase I.
- Active Elbow Range of Motion: Begin gentle active and active-assisted elbow range of motion (ROM) as tolerated. Expect full elbow flexion and extension by 4 weeks postop.
- Gentle Passive Elbow Extension: If full elbow extension is not achieved by 4 weeks postop, then gentle passive elbow extension may be initiated. Grasp a 1-3 pound dumbbell weight on the operated side. With operated extremity out in front, support the extended elbow with the opposite hand, allowing the weight to pull the elbow into full extension. Hold for 30-60 seconds, repeat 4-6 times per day.
- Gentle Passive Elbow Flexion: If full elbow flexion is not achieved by 4 weeks postop, then gentle passive elbow flexion may be initiated. Flex the operated elbow by tightening the biceps. With the opposite hand, gently pull the operated hand toward the operated shoulder. Hold for 30-60 seconds, repeat 4-6 times per day.

PRECAUTIONS:
- Avoid elbow injury.
- Do not lift or push off with the operated extremity.
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Phase III: Strengthening Phase (weeks 7-12)

GOALS:
• Achieve full elbow ROM.
• Improve upper extremity strength.

ANCILLARY MEASURES:
• Discontinue removable short-arm splint.
• Gentle scar massage if needed.
• Limit lifting with operated extremity.

EXERCISES:
• Continue all Phase I and II exercises.
  • Wrist flexion stretch: Bring operated arm straight out in front with elbow extended, palm downward. With the opposite hand, flex the wrist downward and gently stretch the muscles on the back of the forearm. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 3-4 times per day.
  • Wrist extension stretch: Bring operated arm straight out in front with elbow extended, palm downward. With the opposite hand, extend the wrist upward and stretch the muscles on the palm side of the forearm. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 3-4 times per day.
  • Wrist flexion curl: Sit with operated forearm resting on a table, hand extended over the edge of the table. Grasp a one pound dumbbell weight. With palm up, flex your wrist, curling the weight inward. Hold for 2 seconds, 10 repetitions.
  • Wrist extension curl: Sit with operated forearm resting on a table, hand extended over the edge of the table. Grasp a one pound dumbbell weight. With palm downward, extend your wrist backward. Hold for 2 seconds, 10 repetitions.
  • Biceps curl: Grasp a 1-3 pound dumbbell weight. With arm held in front of body, elbow supported and palm upward, flex your operated elbow to tighten the biceps muscle. Hold for 5 seconds, then relax. Complete 10 repetitions.
  • Triceps curl: Grasp a 1-3 pound dumbbell weight. Raise the operated arm up overhead with the elbow supported by the opposite hand and flexed 90 degrees. Then extend the elbow, raising the weight fully overhead by tightening the triceps. Hold for 5 seconds, then relax. Complete 10 repetitions.

PRECAUTIONS:
• Avoid elbow injury. Exercises should be pain free.
• Therapist should discontinue treatment and send patient back to our office if strengthening program causes elbow pain.