

1. Distal Biceps Repair - Recovery Guide

Discharge

You will be discharged on the same day as surgery.

Sling

The sling is to be worn for 4 weeks unless advised otherwise.

You may come out of the sling when sitting comfortably in a chair, using a computer, eating, and performing exercises.

Bandage / Dressings / Sutures

You will be discharged from hospital with a dressing and bandage covering your elbow wound. The bandage can be removed the day after surgery. Leave the dressings in place until your 2-3 week review and we will remove it. The dressings are water resistant. Showering is fine but please keep your dressings relatively dry until your post op appointment.

Swelling / Icing

Post-operative swelling of the elbow and forearm is normal and should gradually decrease over the course of 1-2 weeks. Regular icing is effective for managing both pain and swelling. Apply ice 3-5 times a day for 20 minutes at a time.

If the swelling worsens, or if you notice redness around the wound or experience a fever, please contact our office immediately or see your local doctor. For after-hours concerns, you can also reach out to the hospital emergency department.

Pain Relief / Medications

Your anaesthetist will have prescribed a range of painkillers for you to go home with. You should take them as prescribed. In general you should take paracetamol regularly, followed by anti-inflammatories if prescribed and then strong painkillers (such as Palexia / Tapentadol) for top-up pain relief. Cease these medications as soon as the pain allows.

Dr Robinson recommends taking Vitamin C 1000-1500 mg daily from 2 days prior to surgery until at least 3 weeks post the surgery.

Post-Operative Appointments

- 3 weeks: Your first post op clinic review.
A nurse will remove your dressing and review your wound.
- 3 months: Review to see how you are progressing (if required).

Return to Work / Driving

A reasonable goal for returning to office work is within 2-3 weeks. For more physically demanding jobs, the target is typically 3-5 months on limited duties. Driving can usually be resumed around 6 weeks. It is important to note that you will not be covered by your car insurance if you are involved in a motor vehicle accident before 6 weeks.

Return to Activities guide

Running: 6 weeks

Swimming: 4-6 weeks

Tennis: 4-6 months

Golf: 4-6 months

Gym based activities may commence at 4-6 months with modification.

Physical Therapy Guide

Physical therapy can be commenced the day after surgery. Let your activity be guided by your pain, **do not continue any exercises that are painful**. Please note these exercises are a guide only, and you may be directed to a more specific program from your physiotherapist.

Begin these exercises the day following your surgery, performing them 3 to 5 times a day. Gradually work on increasing your range of motion as you are able.

Wrist flexion and extension (preview here)

Wrist bends improve flexibility and help break up scar tissue.

- Extend your arm with your wrist straight and palm facing down.
- Flex your hand up to the ceiling, and then let it drop downward to the floor.
- A more advanced option is to use your other hand to gently pull your wrist back by your fingers, holding the stretch for 10-30 seconds.



Passive elbow extension ([preview here](#))

- Lay comfortably with your affected arm bent, with your elbow pointing toward the ceiling.
- Gently straighten your arm, raising your hand to the ceiling
- Lower your hand back down toward your pillow



Passive elbow flexion ([preview here](#))

- Sit or stand comfortably with your arm straight by your side.
- Use your non operative arm to support and lift your non operative arm
- Slowly bend your arm up toward your shoulder, and then lower it back down by your side, using your non operative arm as support throughout



Active assisted shoulder flexion ([preview here](#))

- Laying, sitting or standing, hold the hand of your operative arm in front of your chest
- With the support of the uninjured arm, raise both hands slowly towards the ceiling
- Then gently return hands to central position
- Once confident with the exercise, lower your hands behind your head for an extra stretch

Stage 1:



Stage 2:



Stage 3:



Passive Supination and Pronation

- With your arm in the sling, clasp your hands together.
- Use your uninjured arm to gently rotate the palm of your operated arm up and down.

These notes are intended as a guide only. Some of the details may vary depending on your individual circumstances and at the discretion of your surgeon. © Balance Orthopaedics 2024



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Repeat this exercise for 3 sets of 10 repetitions.

*image

Forearm supination & pronation ([preview here](#))

- Stand or sit comfortably, with your elbow by your side and your arm bent at 90 degrees, with your affected forearm palm facing down.
- Alternate between palm up and palm down
- If preferred you may sit so the back of your hand rests on your thigh for support, with your palm facing up. Alternate between palm up and palm down while keeping your forearm in place on your thigh.

Repeat this exercise 10 times, 3 times per day.



Elbow flexion and extension ([preview here](#))

- Sit or stand comfortable with your arm straight by your side.
- Slowly bend your arm up toward your shoulder, and then lower it back down by your side.

Repeat this exercise 10 times, 3 times a day.

