

Dr. Allen Thumb UCL Reconstruction Rehabilitation Protocol

Phase I: Immediate Post-Op (Weeks 0-2)

- Leave thumb spica splint in place until first visit (bag on arm to shower)
- Scheduled NSAIDs & Tylenol
- Opioids for break through pain (goal to wean by end of week 1)
- Non-weight bearing
- Work on finger, elbow, shoulder range of motion

Phase II: Early Motion (Weeks 2-4)

- First post-op visit at ~2 weeks
- Splint & sutures removed at first visit
- Ok to shower after splint is removed
 - Don't soak wound, pat dry and cover with fresh bandage
- Hand based thumb spica brace (comfort cool)
 - To be worn at all times except hygiene and exercises
- First OT visit at 2 weeks (same day as first post-op visit)
 - Scar massage/desensitization
 - AROM of thumb MP
 - Aggressive thumb active motion
 - The use of the internal brace makes for a very stable construct
 - AROM and PROM of thumb CMC and IP
- No pinching/grabbing/lifting

Phase III: Increased Motion (Weeks 4-6)

- Brace at all times except hygiene and exercises
- Scar massage/desensitization
- Exercises
 - AROM and self PROM of thumb MP (aggressive)
 - AROM and PROM of thumb CMC and IP
 - Opposition allowed
- No pinching/grabbing/lifting

Phase IV: Full Motion & Early Strengthening (Weeks 6-8)

- Second post-op visit at 6 weeks
- Wean to brace for activity >#5 only
- Full ROM
- No heavy pinch/grip

Phase V: Advanced Strengthening (Weeks 8-16)

- Wean from brace completely
- Progressive strengthening as tolerated by pain

Phase VI: Return to Activity (Weeks 16+)

- Third post-op visit at 12 weeks
- Advance weight training as able
- Return to full sport/labor work at 16
- Avoid sustained, heavy pinch and stress across UCL until 16 weeks