

## Distal Biceps Repair – Instructions for after surgery

1. Please keep the sling on full time for the first two weeks, and most of the time for six weeks following surgery. You can remove it for bathing and dressing, but otherwise you should wear it day and night.
  - a. It helps protect the tendon repair and acts as a reminder not to straighten the arm fully, or lift anything heavier than a dinner plate.
  - b. If you are concerned that you might be overly active, it is fine to keep the bandage and sling on full time for 2 weeks, until your first follow up.
2. You may unwrap the elastic bandage and cotton wrap 3 days after surgery, and get the incisions wet with normal soap and water. Cover the incisions with medium sized Band-Aids as needed, or any gauze bandage, to protect your clothing.
3. Medication:
  - a. Please take the anti-inflammatory (Indocid) 25 mg orally three times a day for 3 weeks to help minimize the chance of extra bone growth around the elbow. It will also help with swelling and pain.
  - b. Because this can irritate your stomach, I have prescribed Tecta, a stomach protecting medication to reduce the chance of reflux and stomach ulcer.
  - c. Narcotics may be needed for few days after surgery, wean off within a few days.
4. Home exercises:
  - a. First 2 weeks post surgery
    - i. Move your fingers and wrist fully, to minimize stiffness.
    - ii. With your elbow bent at 90 degrees (a right angle) you may turn your forearm and palm down (pronation) and upward. This will be stiff, and is a good gentle stretch.
    - iii. Do not straighten your arm fully or forcefully for the first 2 weeks, as this stresses the repair. Do not lift anything heavier than a dinner plate.
  - b. Weeks 2-6 post surgery
    - i. I expect that you will achieve full elbow range of motion by 6 weeks after surgery, see a physiotherapist if you have concerns.
    - ii. You can remove your sling while in a quiet environment (at a desk or at home). I suggest keeping it on when travelling or around other people, to avoid bumps and reaching/straining.
  - c. Weeks 6-12 post surgery
    - i. The arm feels more flexible, but the tendon does not heal to the bone until 12 weeks post surgery, and so do not lift more than 5 lbs.
    - ii. No sports or unpredictable activities.
  - d. Week 12-24 post surgery
    - i. Begin progressive strengthening with a physiotherapist or at a gym, start with a low weight (5-10lbs) and focus on higher repetitions.
    - ii. As your strength increases, incorporate other strengthening in a progressive fashion, I suggest avoiding body-weight exercises like push-ups and pull –ups in the early phase.
  - e. Week 24 onwards
    - i. Return to sport and unpredictable activities when you have confidence and strength
    - ii. The muscle will continue to gain strength for a year post surgery, and is sometimes stronger than before the injury.