

Rehabilitation Guidelines | Distal Biceps Tendon Repair

What to expect during your recovery

Rehabilitation after distal biceps tendon repair is a **progressive process** over 3 to 4 months. Recovery focuses on **protecting the repair in the early stages**, allowing movement but avoiding strain, followed by controlled strengthening and return to normal activities.

Your rehabilitation program will be explained by Dr. Dallalana initially following the framework below, then guided by your physiotherapist through to full recovery

General guidelines

- **A sling is not needed.** One will be provided to use for comfort if required for the first few days
- Early rehabilitation focuses on **gentle movement without loading the tendon**
- All exercises should be **pain-free**

Early phase 0 to 6 weeks

Pain and swelling management -

ice for the first week at the front of the elbow

Compression bandage use for 2 weeks -
remove for showers

No Sling is needed unless for comfort within the first few days when walking

Normal use of the hand and arm for eating, typing, personal care and other simple tasks

No lifting more than 500 grams.

You may drive after 1 week if the area is not still painful

- Home based movement exercise 3x / day
- Elbow movement range:
Flexion and extension exercises used to achieve full bend and full straightening as soon as comfort allows
Rotational exercises (pronation and supination) to commence in this period also to develop full forearm rotation

Intermediate phase 6 to 12 weeks

Physiotherapist supervised - commence appointments from 6 weeks following surgery

- Completion of full movement, if not already achieved
- Controlled strengthening - increasing load across the bicep of approx. 500g per week to 3 months
- Functional movement retraining

Advanced phase 3 to 6 months

Physiotherapist supervised

- **Strength and endurance**
Escalation of resistance exercises as tolerated
- **Progressive lifting and rotational strength development**, particularly **supination**
- **Work-specific or sport-specific exercises**

Return to work, sport, and exercise

- Desk-based work: Immediate
- Light duties: Usually 6 to 8 weeks
- Most types of physical work: 3 months
- Heavy manual work, weights training, or contact sport: After 4 months



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Your rehabilitation journey

Recovery after distal biceps tendon repair requires patience and gradual progression. Protecting the repair early and progressing strengthening carefully is important to achieve the best outcome.

Important note

These guidelines provide a general framework for recovery. Any specific instructions provided by Dr Richard Dallalana, whether written or verbal, should be followed in preference to these guidelines.