

Thumb UCL Injury: Conservative

This protocol is intended to provide the clinician with a guideline for the conservative rehabilitation course of a patient who has had a UCL injury. General time frames are given for reference to the average, but individual patients will progress at different rates depending on their age, comorbidities, pre-injury range of motion, strength, health/functional status, rehabilitation compliance, learning barriers and complications. Specific time frames, restrictions and precautions are given to protect healing tissues.

Thumb UCL Injury: Conservative

Phase I (initial visit- 3-5 days)

Rehabilitation appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seen for initial appointment and most likely follow up in 3 weeks
Rehabilitation goals and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fabricate orthosis for immobilization of MCPJ for 3 weeks• ROM of all other joints• Activities of daily living within in restrictions• Pain management• Edema management
Suggested therapeutic exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initiate active wrist, finger, and thumb IP AROM• No thumb MCPJ ROM
Orthosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hand based thumb spica orthosis with IPJ free; MPJ protected from radial/ulnar deviation to be worn at all times except hygiene
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No lifting, pushing, pulling more than 5 pounds with involved upper extremity• No weightbearing of involved upper extremity• No aggressive pinching or gripping with involved hand

Thumb UCL Injury: Conservative

Phase II (3 weeks)

Rehabilitation appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x/week or per therapist discretion
Rehabilitation goals and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities of daily living within in restrictions • Pain management • Edema management
Suggested therapeutic exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate gentle thumb MCPJ flexion AROM allowing up to 35° • If ROM painful, consider 1 more week of immobilization and/or refer to physician to re-evaluate
Orthosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand based orthosis with MP protected from radial/ulnar deviation to be worn at all times except hygiene and exercises
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No lifting, pushing, pulling more than 5 pounds with involved upper extremity • No weightbearing of involved upper extremity • No aggressive pinching or gripping with involved hand

Thumb UCL injury: conservative

Phase III (4 weeks)

Rehabilitation appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x/week or per therapist discretion
Rehabilitation goals and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities of daily living within in restrictions • Pain management
Suggested therapeutic exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress thumb MCPJ flexion AROM to 50°
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No lifting, pushing, pulling more than 5 pounds with involved upper extremity • No weightbearing of involved upper extremity • No aggressive pinching or gripping with involved hand
Orthosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear at all times except for hygiene and exercises
Progression criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Per pain tolerance

Phase IV (6 weeks)

Rehabilitation appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x/week or per therapist discretion
Rehabilitation goals and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities of daily living within in restrictions – engage in light to moderate activities with orthosis not in place • Pain management • Edema management
Suggested therapeutic exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate PROM as needed, avoiding lateral stress to MPJ • Initiate pain-free isometric strengthening
Orthosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear orthosis all the time except for light-moderate activities, exercises, and bathing
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No lifting, pushing, pulling more than 5 pounds with involved upper extremity • No weightbearing of involved upper extremity • No aggressive pinching or gripping with involved hand
Progression criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Per pain tolerance

Thumb UCL Injury: Conservative

Phase V (8 weeks)

Rehabilitation appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1x/week or per therapist discretion
Rehabilitation goals and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement in activities that do not strain thumb
Suggested therapeutic exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate pain-free concentric two-point strengthening, grip and pinch
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No lifting, pushing, pulling more than 5 pounds with involved upper extremity
Orthosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discontinue orthosis expect for high-risk activity
Progression criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Per pain tolerance

Thumb UCL Injury: Conservative

Phase VI (10-12 weeks)

Rehabilitation appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As needed
Rehabilitation goals and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resume all activities with no restrictions
Suggested therapeutic exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening as needed Strengthening specific for work and leisure activities
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None Per MD for return to specific sports/activities
Orthosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discontinue
Progression criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Per pain tolerance and MD guidance