

Thumb UCL Repair

This protocol is intended to provide the clinician with a guideline for the postoperative rehabilitation course of a patient who has undergone thumb UCL reconstruction/repair. General time frames are given for reference to the average, but individual patients will progress at different rates depending on their age, comorbidities, pre-surgical 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 and surgical reconstruction.

Thumb UCL Repair

Phase I (10-14 days after surgery)

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 restrictions • Edema management • Scar/wound management
Suggested therapeutic exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate active wrist, finger, and thumb IP A/AA/PROM
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No lifting, pushing, or pulling more than 5 pounds with involved upper extremity • No weightbearing of involved upper extremity • No aggressive pinching and gripping with involved upper extremity
Orthosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand based thumb spica orthosis with MP protected from radial/ulnar deviation to be worn at all times except hygiene

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Phase II (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 restrictions • Scar management • Edema management
Suggested therapeutic exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate thumb AROM
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No lifting, pushing, or pulling more than 5 pounds with involved upper extremity • No weightbearing of involved upper extremity • No aggressive pinching and gripping with involved upper extremity
Orthosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear all the time except for bathing and exercises
Progression criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Per pain tolerance

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Phase III (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 restrictions - light, functional use allowed without orthosis with care to avoid grasp of large objects or sustained pinched Scar management
Suggested therapeutic exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROM thumb initiated as needed- avoiding lateral stress to MPJ Initiate pain-free isometric strengthening of the thumb
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No lifting, pushing, or pulling more than 5 pounds with involved upper extremity No weightbearing of involved upper extremity No aggressive pinching and gripping with involved upper extremity
Orthosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate weaning of orthosis. Discontinue orthosis during the day and wear with heavy activities and at night If pain continues, continue orthosis except for exercises
Progression criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Per pain tolerance

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Phase IV (8 weeks)

Rehabilitation appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As needed
Rehabilitation goals and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities of daily living within restrictions Full ROM of the thumb
Suggested therapeutic exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate pain-free concentric grip and pinch Initiate functional grip and pinching activities
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No lifting, pushing, or pulling more than 5 pounds with involved upper extremity
Orthosis management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discontinue, wear for heavy activities If ROM is very limited, can implement static or dynamic progressive orthosis
Progression criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Per pain tolerance

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Phase V (10-12 weeks)

Rehabilitation appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As needed
Rehabilitation goals and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities of daily living without restrictions
Suggested therapeutic exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work and leisure strengthening specific
Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No restrictions
Orthosis management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discontinue
Progression criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Per pain tolerance and physician