

UCL/RCL Thumb MP Joint Repair Rehabilitation Protocol

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Please fax initial evaluation and progress notes to 815-381-7498.

1-14 Days Postoperative

- Do NOT remove the surgical bandage.
- Restrictions: No heavy lifting greater than 0 lbs.
- The patient is to begin active range of motion of the uninvolved fingers to prevent stiffness and reduce swelling.

10-14 Days Postoperative

- The sutures are removed at Dr. Holtkamp's office.
- The therapist will fabricate a hand-based thumb spica splint.
- The orthosis is to be worn at all times. The orthosis may be removed for hygiene purposes and to perform the exercise program.
- The therapist will instruct proper skin care to prevent skin breakdown. The skin should be completely dry before re-applying the orthosis.
- Instruct the patient to begin active range of motion exercises of the thumb without stressing the UCL/RCL repair.
- Educate the patient on anti-edema management. This includes, but not limited to, self-retrograde massage, cold therapy, and extremity elevation. The anti-edema management will continue for several weeks.

3 Weeks Postoperative

- The therapist will begin scar tissue management to decrease sensitivity and density, which could include ultrasound and/or silicone gel pads per therapist discretion. The scar tissue management will continue for several weeks.

4 Weeks Postoperative

- Instruct the patient to begin passive range of motion exercises of the thumb without stressing the UCL/RCL repair.

6 Weeks Postoperative

- The orthosis is discontinued for light activities. Continue the orthosis during activities that require weighted resistance or sustained power gripping/pinching.

8 Weeks Postoperative

- Instruct the patient to begin a progressive strengthening exercise program. Avoid increased strain across the UCL/RCL repair until 16 weeks postoperatively.

12 Weeks Postoperative

- Instruct the patient to continue their home exercise program for range of motion and strengthening.

- The orthosis is discontinued for all activities.
- If the patient has not achieved functional range of motion and strength, then continue with occupational therapy for an additional 2-4 weeks.

16 Weeks Postoperative

- The patient may resume normal activities of daily living as tolerated.
- Work status: The patient is allowed to return to full duty status if the job requirements have been met. If not met, then a functional capacity evaluation and work hardening program may be recommended.
- The healing process can take up to a full year. Therefore, it is advised to continue with the home exercise program until goals have been met.