Exercises Following Elbow Injury
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Elbow Exercises

Patient Information
You are now allowed to move your elbow. The elbow can get stiff if it is not moved following injury. Straightening the elbow is the most difficult to get back to normal. You may feel discomfort with the exercises and this is normal. You may have some bruising or swelling in your arm. This will get better with time. If your arm is quite swollen, lie down with your arm propped up on pillows so that it is higher than your heart for 30 minutes, 2 - 3 times per day.

Comfort Measures
Your pain may be worse at night. Try sleeping on the uninjured side with 2 or 3 pillows in front of you. Put the injured arm on the pillows.

When sitting, try putting 1 - 2 pillows on your lap and rest your elbow on the pillows.
Heat and Ice
Use heat (ie. hot pack, hot water bottle) for about 15 minutes before exercise to help loosen up your elbow.
If you had surgery, the incision needs to be well healed (closed) and not infected before using heat or soaking in water.
Use ice (ie. a gel pack, bag of frozen vegetables) for about 15 minutes following exercise to help control pain in your elbow, as needed.

Exercises
Move your arm/elbow as far as you can without too much discomfort, this will gradually decrease as your elbow becomes more flexible. It is important to hold the stretches for the full time to allow the muscles to stretch.
Only do the exercises you have been asked to do.
Plan to do your exercises 3 times per day.
Stretching Exercises
Hold your injured arm with the hand of the uninjured side. Slowly bend the elbow using the uninjured hand. You should feel a stretch in your elbow/back of your arm. Hold for 10 - 30 seconds.
Then straighten the elbow. You should feel a stretch in your elbow/front of your arm. Hold for 10 - 30 seconds.
Repeat __________ times.
Active Movement Exercises
Slowly bend your injured elbow.
Hold for 5 seconds.
Then straighten your elbow.
Hold for 5 seconds.
Repeat ___________ times.
Bend your elbow, keep it at your side.
Turn your wrist so that your palm is facing up.
Hold for 5 seconds.
Turn your wrist so that your palm faces downward.
Hold for 5 seconds.
Repeat ___________ times.
Bend your wrist up and down over the edge of a table. Repeat __________ times.
Hold a stick or cane in front of you with both hands. Lift both arms forward using your good arm to raise the injured arm. Hold for _____ seconds. Slowly lower using mostly your good arm. Repeat ____________ times.
Raise your arm up in front of you as far as you can.
Hold for _____ seconds.
Return to your side.

Repeat ___________ times.
Lie on your back with your injured arm at your side, palm facing up.
Slowly bend your injured elbow.
Hold for 5 seconds.
Then straighten your elbow.
Hold for 5 seconds.
Repeat __________ times.
Lie on your back with your injured arm off the edge of the bed, palm facing up. For comfort, you can use a rolled up towel under your arm. Straighten your elbow. Let your injured arm hang. You should feel a stretch in the front of your arm.

Hold for 10 - 30 seconds.
Repeat ___________ times.

Progression: Do the exercise as above, with a ____ lb weight in your hand.
Repeat ___________ times.
Bend your elbow, keep it at your side. Use your hand on your uninjured side to turn your wrist so that your palm is facing up.

Hold for 10 - 30 seconds.

Then turn your wrist so that your palm is facing down.

Hold for 10 - 30 seconds.

You should feel a stretch in your elbow.

Repeat ___________ times.
Holding a _____ lb weight, slowly bend your injured elbow.
Hold for ____ seconds.

Then straighten your elbow.
Hold for ____ seconds.
Repeat ______ times.
Sit or stand with your injured arm raised overhead, the other hand supports your injured arm.

Slowly lower your hand, bending at the elbow. Hold for _____ seconds.
Raise your hand, straightening your elbow. Hold for _____ seconds.
Repeat ___________ times.

Progression: Add _____ lb weight and repeat the exercise as described above.
Lie on your stomach with the forearm of your injured arm hanging over the edge.

Straighten your elbow.
Hold for _____ seconds.
Relax your arm by bending your elbow.
Repeat ___________ times.
Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Place your hands on a wall shoulder width apart. Lean towards the wall. Slowly push away from the wall by straightening your elbows.
Hold for _____ seconds.
Repeat ___________ times.
Your exercise routine will include:

1. Soaking your wrist and hand in warm water for 15 minutes. This will help to soothe the pain and make it easier to move. It will also help soften dry flaky skin so it may be removed more easily. Skin lotion may be used to help soften the skin.

2. Range of motion and stretching exercises to increase your wrist and hand movement.

3. Strengthening exercises to improve how well your wrist and hand works.

4. Ice, if you feel pain, increased discomfort or increased swelling after the exercises you can apply an ice pack or a bag of frozen vegetables over the wrist area for 10-15 minutes.

Bend your elbow and keep it at your side. Hold the end of a long object in you hand and start in the upright position.

Move the object slowly like a wiper so that palm faces down (keep elbow tucked at side). Repeat ____________.

Move the object slowly like a wiper so that palm faces up (keep elbow tucked at side). Repeat ____________.
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