DR. KAISEN YAO, MD

ORTHOPEDIC SPORTS MEDICINE SURGEON

Post-Operative Physical Therapy Protocol

Lateral Epicondyle Debridement

Northwell Health • Department of Orthopedic Surgery & Sports Medicine • Dr. Kaisen Yao, MD

Patient Name	Date of Surgery	Prescribing Surgeon
		Dr. Kaisen Yao, MD

General Guidelines & Precautions

- A brief period of splinting or rest may be used in the first days for comfort, followed by early motion.
- Avoid resisted wrist extension and heavy gripping until cleared by the surgeon.
- Prioritize swelling control with ice, compression, and elevation.
- Contact the surgeon for fever, excessive drainage, increasing redness, or uncontrolled pain.

PHASE I
Immediate Post-Op

TIMEFRAME
WEEKS 0–2

Goals:
Control pain and swelling and maintain elbow, wrist, and hand mobility.

Precautions:
Avoid resisted wrist extension, heavy gripping, and lifting through the involved arm.

Interventions:
Cryotherapy, compression, elevation, gentle active range of motion of the elbow, wrist, and hand, and scar mobilization once the incision is healed.

Criteria to Progress:
Incision healing well and pain controlled.

PHASE II
Progressive Motion & Early Strengthening

TIMEFRAME
WEEKS 2–6

Goals:
Restore full range of motion and begin pain-guided strengthening of the wrist extensors.

Interventions:

Gentle stretching of the wrist extensors, isometric wrist extension progressing to light resistance, forearm and grip strengthening, and soft-tissue work as needed.

Criteria to Progress:
Full range of motion, minimal tenderness, and good tolerance of light resistance.

PHASE III
Strengthening & Function

TIMEFRAME
WEEKS 6–10

Goals:
Restore full strength and endurance for daily and work-related grip and lifting tasks.

Interventions:
Progressive resistance for wrist extension/flexion and grip, eccentric wrist extensor strengthening, and functional task simulation.

Criteria to Progress:
Strength approaching the uninvolved side and no pain with functional gripping tasks.

PHASE IV
Return to Activity

TIMEFRAME
WEEKS 10–12+

Goals:
Return to unrestricted work, recreation, or racquet sports.

Interventions:
Sport- or task-specific strengthening, grip endurance training, and gradual return to racquet or repetitive gripping activity.

Return to Sport/Work:
Return to racquet sports or heavy manual labor should follow surgeon and therapist clearance based on strength and symptom-free function.

Discharge Criteria:
Full pain-free range of motion, symmetrical strength, and safe mechanics with gripping and lifting tasks.

This protocol is a general guideline. Progression should be individualized by the treating physical therapist in coordination with Dr. Yao's office based on the extent of debridement and tissue quality.