DR. KAISEN YAO, MD

ORTHOPEDIC SPORTS MEDICINE SURGEON

Post-Operative Physical Therapy Protocol

Olecranon Fracture Fixation

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

- Follow surgeon-specific guidance on splint/brace use, weight bearing through the arm, and motion restrictions — fixation stability varies by fracture pattern and hardware used.
- Avoid leaning or resting weight on the point of the elbow until healed.
- Prioritize swelling control with ice, compression, and elevation.
- Contact the surgeon for fever, excessive drainage, increasing redness, uncontrolled pain, or new numbness or tingling in the forearm or hand.

PHASE I

Immediate Post-Op Protection

TIMEFRAME

WEEKS 0–2

Goals:
Protect the fixation, control pain and swelling, and maintain wrist/hand mobility.

Precautions:
No weight bearing or leaning on the elbow; avoid resisted triceps activity; follow surgeon-specific motion limits.

Interventions:
Cryotherapy, compression, elevation, gentle active or active-assisted elbow motion as permitted, and wrist/hand range of motion and grip work.

Criteria to Progress:
Early radiographic evidence of stability per surgeon and pain controlled.

PHASE II

Progressive Motion

TIMEFRAME

WEEKS 2–6

Goals:
Progress elbow range of motion and begin gentle activation of surrounding musculature.

Interventions:
Active and active-assisted elbow flexion/extension and forearm rotation within cleared range, gentle isometrics, and continued wrist/hand strengthening.

Precautions:
Continue to avoid resisted triceps loading and leaning on the elbow until bony healing is confirmed.

Criteria to Progress:
Confirmed bony healing per surgeon, improving range of motion, and minimal pain.

PHASE III

Strengthening

TIMEFRAME

WEEKS 6–12

Goals:
Restore full range of motion and progressive strength of the elbow and forearm.

Interventions:
Progressive resistance exercises for elbow flexion/extension, forearm rotation, wrist, and grip; functional lifting progression as tolerated.

Criteria to Progress:
Full range of motion, strength approaching the uninvolved side, and no pain with functional loading.

PHASE IV

Return to Activity

TIMEFRAME

MONTHS 3–4+

Goals:
Return to unrestricted work, recreation, or sport.

Interventions:
Sport- or task-specific strengthening and progressive loading as needed.

Return to Sport/Work:
Return to contact sports or heavy manual labor should follow surgeon and therapist clearance based on confirmed healing and strength.

Discharge Criteria:
Full pain-free range of motion, symmetrical strength, and safe mechanics with functional and sport-specific tasks.

This protocol is a general guideline. Because timelines depend heavily on fracture pattern and fixation stability, progression must be individualized by the treating physical therapist in coordination with Dr. Yao's office and confirmed against follow-up radiographs.