

# Distal Biceps Repair

## Hand Therapy Patient Information

### What is a Distal Biceps Repair?

The tendon at the end of your Biceps has been surgically repaired. This is done by reattaching the tendon to the bone in your forearm. The repair is **weak** for the first 10 days and the wound will be dressed. You will have been given a sling for comfort but **do not wear this full time**. You will be advised to move your hand and wrist normally, and your elbow gently through its normal range. You must not lift any load until advised by your health care professional.

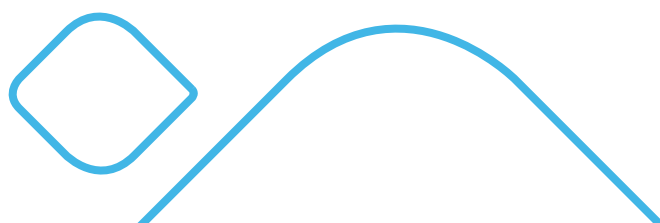
- You **must not** undertake any exercises that load the biceps for 6 weeks, unless advised by your therapist.
- You **must not lift or move any weight** at this stage.
- You **must never** exercise into pain.
- You **must not** use your hand for anything other than the exercises shown to you in this booklet.

You will be taught the exercises in this booklet to complete **4-6 times daily** to move your tendon safely and restore your full active range of movement.

### Rehabilitation (Weeks 0-2)

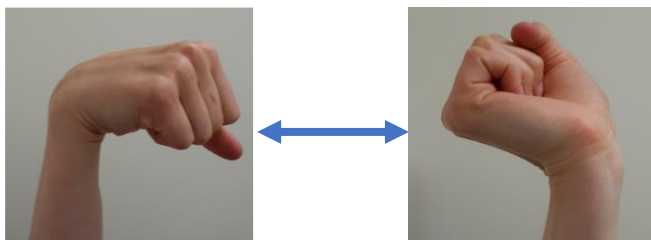
For the first few days keep your arm elevated when resting to help reduce swelling. Once your stitches have been removed (roughly 10-14 days post-op) or have begun to dissolve, your therapist will teach you scar massage. This is done by applying firm pressure to the scar and moving in small circles.

You should complete the following exercises, as advised by your therapist.



## Exercises

1. With your fingers relaxed, bend your wrist forwards and backwards. Repeat this 10 times.



2. Bend and straighten your elbow to restore full range of movement. If you are struggling to achieve this then using your other hand, gently move your operated arm as far as you are able without causing pain. Repeat this 10 times, 4-6 times daily.



3. **With your operated elbow placed at your side**, turn your palm up and then down to restore full active range of movement. If you are struggling to achieve this, **use your other hand** to gently rotate your operated arm as far as you are able without causing pain. Repeat this 10 times, 4-6 times daily.



4. Sitting or standing with a **good posture**, gently draw your shoulder blades back and down and hold for 5 secs. Repeat this 10 times, 4-6 times daily.



### Rehabilitation (Weeks 2-4)

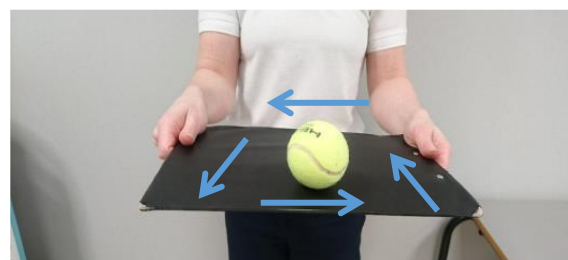
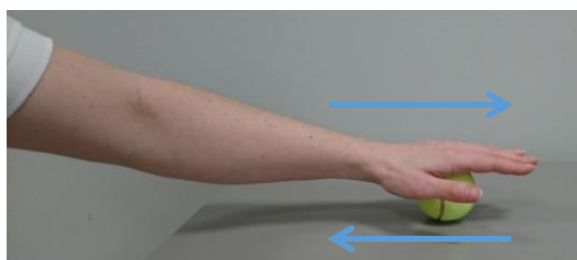
- You should **no longer** be wearing your sling
- You should have achieved **full active range of motion** at your elbow in all directions
- You **should** be regularly massaging your scar
- You **should not be lifting or moving weight** at this stage
- You should be using your arm for light duties only i.e. using a knife and fork/your phone
- You should be continuing with your exercises as above

### Exercises

Continue the exercises and scar massage from 0-2 weeks.

By the end of week four you should have achieved full range of movement at your elbow. If you have not, then your Hand Therapist will give you stretches to achieve this.

1. Using a tennis ball or football, roll it on a table, forwards and backwards and side to side. You can also place the tennis ball on a book or tray and roll from side to side in a controlled way as shown below. Complete each activity for 1 minute.

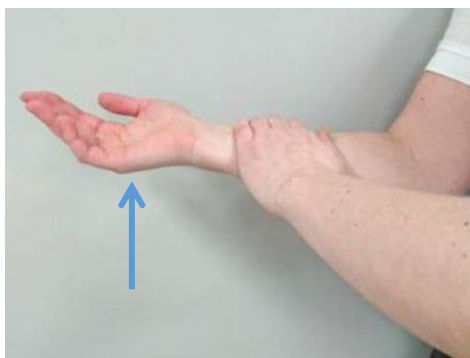


### Rehabilitation (Weeks 4-6)

- Continue all of your previous exercises, scar massage, and use your arm within the limits set by your Hand Therapist.
- You **can** now start to **strengthen** your arm
- You **can** now start to **bear weight** on your operated arm
- You **can** consider driving if you are pain free and feel capable of doing so safely.

### Exercises

1. With your elbow tucked into your side. Place your un-operated hand on top of your forearm and keeping your operated arm still, gently push up into your hand and hold for 5 seconds. Repeat x 5, 4-6 times daily.



2. With your operated elbow tucked into your side and your palm facing upwards. Place your un-operated hand under your forearm and keeping your operated arm still, gently push down into your hand and hold for 5 seconds. Repeat x 5, 4-6 times daily.



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3. Stand up and place both your hands comfortably on to a table with your elbows straight. Gently lean forwards putting weight on both arms. Hold for 5 seconds and return to the start position. Repeat x5, 4-5 times daily.



4. Stand up and place both your hands comfortably on to a table with your elbows straight. Gently lean forwards putting weight on both arms, then move your shoulders to the right, hold for 5 seconds and slowly return to the start position. Repeat to the left. Repeat x5, 4-5 times daily.

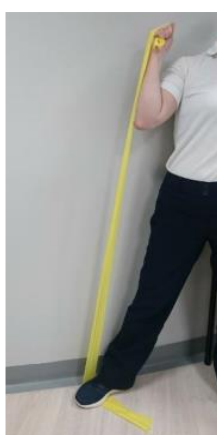
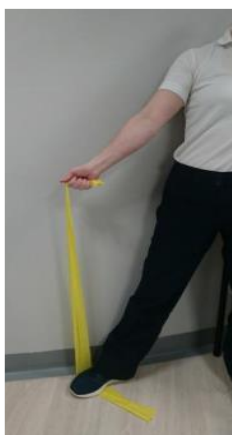


### Rehabilitation (6-8 weeks)

- Your tendon is getting stronger now but your arm will still feel weak
- You should now feel comfortable bearing weight through your operated arm
- Your Hand Therapist will increase your weight bearing exercises depending on your progress
- Your Hand Therapist will also provide you with some therapy band.

### Exercises

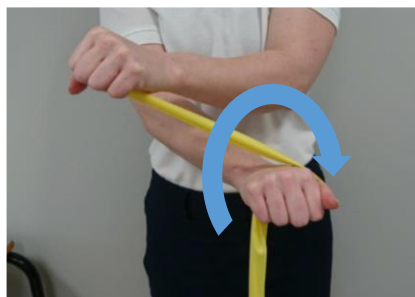
1. Sit or Stand with your operated arm by your side. Place the therapy band under your foot, and hold the other end in your operated hand. Bend your elbow so your hand is at shoulder height, hold for a few seconds, and slowly return to the start position. Repeat x5, 4-5 times daily.



2. Sit or Stand with your elbows tucked in at your side. Hold the therapy band in both hands as shown below. Keeping your un-operated arm still, turn your operated arm palm up to the ceiling and hold for 5 seconds. Repeat x5, 4-5 times daily.



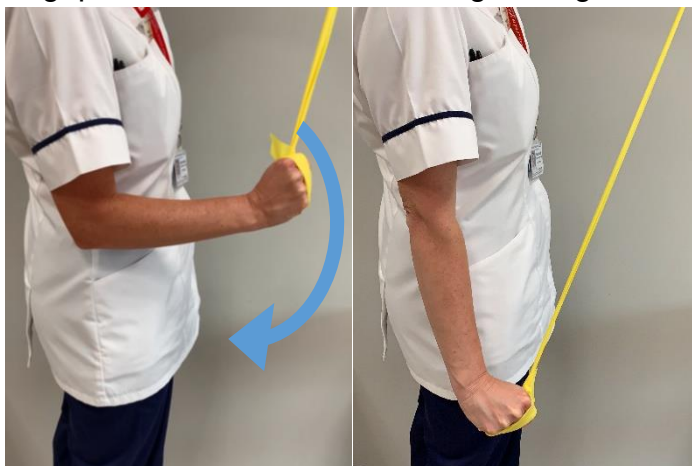
3. Sit or Stand with your elbows tucked in at your side. Hold the therapy band in both hands and cross your arms over as shown below. Keeping your un-operated arm still, turn your operated arm palm down to the floor and hold for 5 seconds. Repeat x5, 4-5 times daily.



### Rehabilitation (8-12 weeks)

You **should** now be using your operated arm normally for everyday use. Directed by your Hand Therapist you can begin maximal weight bearing of your operated arm.

1. Hold one end of your therapy band with your other hand at shoulder height. Then, with the arm you're strengthening, pull down on the band, straightening the elbow.



2. Stand one step away from the wall. Lean forward until your forearms are resting on the wall and keep your back straight. Walk your forearms up the wall as high as pain allows and then down again. You can progress this exercise then by adding a band to your forearms in a loop shape.



### Rehabilitation (12+ weeks)

Check with your therapist before returning to heavy manual work, contact sports or sports that require prolonged periods of holding e.g. bouldering/climbing. Your therapist will be able to advise and guide you on activity-specific exercises.

It is **important** to discuss any problems or concerns you have with your therapist.

**If you have any problems, please contact your physiotherapist. Contact details are below.**

#### **Hand Therapy**

Brownsword Therapies Centre (Dept F1)  
Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust  
Combe Park, Bath, BA1 3NG  
01225 821241 | [www.ruh.nhs.uk](http://www.ruh.nhs.uk)

Please contact the Patient Support and Complaints Team (PSCT) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital.

Email [ruh-tr.psct@nhs.net](mailto:ruh-tr.psct@nhs.net) or telephone 01225 825656.