

Physical Therapy: Non-Operative UCL Sprain

The following phases are to be used as a guide for an ulnar collateral ligament sprain. Some patients will progress more quickly and some more slowly. Please evaluate the patient based on individual needs and goals.

Phase I – Acute & Inflammatory Phase:

- Modalities to control inflammation: NSAIDs, ice, clinical modalities as needed
- Active Range of Motion Exercises: Elbow & wrist all planes
- Early scapular strengthening:
 - Begin scapular stabilization with appropriate instruction in mid and lower trapezius facilitation
- Isometric strengthening of the shoulder, elbow, and wrist

Phase II – Subacute & Early Resistive Phase:

- Continue with modalities and range of motion as outlined in Phase I
- Initiate rotator cuff strengthening (PREs), **avoiding extensive valgus forces at the elbow**
- Initiate resistive elbow and wrist strengthening as tolerated

Phase III – Advanced Strengthening:

- Continue with Phase II advancing rotator cuff and scapular strengthening program with the addition of a push-up progression, **avoiding extensive valgus force at the elbow**
- Initiate gym strengthening program
- Begin two-handed plyoball drills, advancing to one-handed
- Begin interval hitting program

Phase IV – Return to Sport:

- Continue with Phase III program
- Advance interval hitting program
- Begin interval throwing program based on:
 - Negative clinical examination
 - No pain or tenderness
 - > 90% strength tests for shoulder, elbow, wrist, and hand
- Re-evaluation with physician and therapist

