

# Cubital Tunnel In-Situ Release Protocol

**Mark Ayzenberg, MD, FAAOS**

## Phase I (Post-op Weeks 0–2) Protection and Symptom Control Phase

- Soft dressing or posterior splint for comfort as directed
- Elbow range of motion as tolerated; avoid prolonged elbow flexion
- Encourage frequent elbow motion to prevent stiffness
- Active range of motion of shoulder, wrist, and hand
- Finger and hand dexterity exercises
- Edema control, elevation, and pain management emphasized
- Avoid resting elbow on hard surfaces

## Phase II (Weeks 2–6) Early Motion and Functional Use Phase

- Discontinue splint or bulky dressing
- Progress elbow range of motion to full as tolerated
- Begin gentle nerve gliding exercises as instructed
- Light functional use of the arm for activities of daily living
- Avoid sustained elbow flexion and repetitive pressure on the ulnar nerve
- Scar management and soft tissue mobilization as indicated

## Phase III (Weeks 6–10) Progressive Strengthening Phase

- Progress to full, pain-free elbow range of motion
- Initiate light strengthening of forearm, wrist, and hand musculature
- Grip strengthening as tolerated
- Begin elbow flexion and extension strengthening
- Continue nerve mobility and desensitization exercises

## Phase IV (Weeks 10–16) Advanced Strengthening and Function

- Advance strengthening and endurance training
- Return to heavier lifting and pushing activities gradually
- Introduce work- or sport-specific tasks
- Emphasize ergonomics and activity modification

## Phase V (Weeks 16+) Return to Activity

- Return to unrestricted work and sport activities as tolerated
- Progress based on symptom resolution, strength, endurance, and functional confidence