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## Distal Radius ORIF Rehabilitation Protocol

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This rehabilitation protocol outlines post-operative management following Distal Radius Open Reduction Internal Fixation (ORIF). Progression is based on healing timelines, surgeon clearance, and patient tolerance with goals of restoring wrist and forearm mobility, improving strength, and returning to full functional use of the hand and upper extremity.

### Phase I: Protection Phase (0–2 Weeks)

- Protect surgical fixation and incision.
- Wrist immobilized in splint or cast.
- No lifting, pushing, or pulling.
- Elevate hand to reduce swelling.
- Edema control including ice, elevation, and compression.
- Finger and thumb ROM exercises.
- Shoulder and elbow ROM exercises.
- Gentle grip strengthening.

### Phase II: Early Motion Phase (2–6 Weeks)

- Begin gentle wrist and forearm ROM once cleared.
- No lifting greater than 1–2 lb.
- Avoid forceful gripping.
- No resisted wrist motion.
- Gentle wrist flexion and extension AROM/AAROM.
- Forearm pronation and supination exercises.
- Tendon gliding exercises.
- Light functional use of the hand.
- Continue edema control.

### Phase III: Strength Initiation (6–8 Weeks)

- Improve wrist and forearm ROM.
- Begin light strengthening.
- Avoid heavy lifting, pushing, or pulling.
- Monitor incision and hardware symptoms.



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- Progress wrist and forearm ROM.
- Light isometrics and theraband strengthening for wrist and forearm.
- Functional hand activities.

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- Continue grip strengthening.

### Phase IV: Strength & Functional Progression (8–12 Weeks)

- Restore functional wrist and hand strength.
- Improve endurance.
- Prepare for ADLs and work tasks.
- Avoid high-impact loading.
- Protect from falls.
- Progressive resistance using putty, hand exercisers, or therabands.
- Closed-chain strengthening such as wall push-ups.
- Functional tasks including lifting light objects.
- Proprioceptive training.

### Phase V: Return to Work & Sport (3–6 Months)

- Restore full wrist and hand strength and motion.
- Return to work, sport, and recreational activity.
- Clearance required for heavy manual labor or sports.
- Advanced strengthening exercises.
- Weight-bearing exercises such as push-ups and plank variations.
- Plyometric or sport-specific drills.
- Work conditioning when appropriate.