Elbow Contracture Release Post-operative Protocol  
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-Note: Ulnar Nerve typically not transposed if patient has >100 degrees of flexion and greater than 60 degrees of extension pre-operatively

**Immediate Post-Operative: (0-3 days)**

**Day of Surgery:**
- Bulky Extension post operative splint placed. Patient may have drain that can be removed based on physician’s orders

**Post-operative Day 1**
- Post operative dressing to be changed and replaced with medipore and gauze dressing. If water-proof Tegaderm dressing placed, this should be kept clean dry and intact until clinical follow up with surgeon
- Initiate weighted stretches over a bolster using 1-2kg (2-5 lbs.) several times daily.
- There are no restrictions on movement (collateral ligaments are intact)

**Post-operative day 1-10**
- Patient to be instructed in home program.
- Full active, active assisted and passive range of motion to maintain full postoperative range of motion.
- Focus on Elbow flexion, extension, pronation and supination in addition to Shoulder ROM Exercises including pendulums.
- May begin shoulder strengthening and scapular stabilization exercises.
- May begin grip strengthening. No elbow strengthening at this time.
- Aggressive Edema control for entire upper extremity
- Instruct regarding proper use of ice to the elbow: 20-30 minutes at a time. After every exercise series.
- For flexion contractures: fabricate night time full extension splint for the elbow. Forearm in neutral, wrist is free.

**Wound Care**
Medipore dressing change every day until totally dry unless water sealed “Tegaderm” used
May shower after 10 days as long as wound healed. No bathing until 3 weeks postoperative.

**Weeks 2-6**
- Continue Outpatient Therapy and Home Exercises
- Therapy reduced to 2-3 visits per weeks as long as not loosing any range of motion
- If LOSS OF MOTION may add static progressive splinting
- Continue grip and shoulder strengthening
- No strengthening wrist extensors or flexors
- Initiate soft tissue mobilization, ultrasound as needed for scar tissue formation
- Initiate desensitization
- Modalities for pain, inflammation and edema control

**Weeks 6-12**
- Continue Week 2-6 Program
- Strengthening
  - May add elbow strengthening: flexion, extension, pronation and supination
  - Add wrist flexor and extensor strengthening
- Goal is to progress to full upper extremity strength while maintaining range of motion