



**Professor M. A. Imam**  
**MD, D.SportMed, PhD, FRCS (Tr and Orth)**  
**Subspecialist in Upper limb and Complex trauma reconstruction**  
**Tel: 020 3384 5588**  
[info@thearmdoc.co.uk](mailto:info@thearmdoc.co.uk)  
[www.thearmdoc.co.uk](http://www.thearmdoc.co.uk)

## **UCL/RCL Thumb MP Joint Repair Rehabilitation Protocol**

### **1-14 Days Post-Surgery:**

- **Do not remove the surgical dressing.**
- **Restrictions:** Avoid lifting any weight.
- Begin **active range of motion exercises** for the unaffected fingers to minimize stiffness and help control swelling.

### **10-14 Days Post-Surgery:**

- Sutures are removed in Dr office.
- A **hand-based thumb spica splint** will be created by the therapist.
- **Orthosis Instructions:** Wear the splint continuously, except during hygiene routines or exercises.
- The therapist will provide guidance on **skin care** to prevent irritation, ensuring the skin is fully dry before reapplying the splint.
- Start **active thumb range of motion exercises** carefully to avoid strain on the UCL/RCL repair.
- **Anti-swelling measures:** Continue anti-edema techniques, such as self-massage, cold therapy, and elevating the limb, over the coming weeks.

### **3 Weeks Post-Surgery:**

- Begin **scar tissue management** with techniques like ultrasound or silicone gel pads, as directed by the therapist, to reduce scar sensitivity and density. Scar management will be ongoing.

## **4 Weeks Post-Surgery:**

- Initiate **passive thumb range of motion exercises**, avoiding stress on the UCL/RCL repair.

## **6 Weeks Post-Surgery:**

- Discontinue the orthosis for light activities; keep it on for tasks that involve **weighted resistance or sustained gripping/pinching**.

## **8 Weeks Post-Surgery:**

- Start a **progressive strengthening program** for the thumb, ensuring no excess strain on the UCL/RCL repair until 16 weeks post-surgery.

## **12 Weeks Post-Surgery:**

- Continue **home exercises** for range of motion and strengthening.
- If functional range and strength are not yet achieved, consider an additional 2-4 weeks of occupational therapy.

## **16 Weeks Post-Surgery:**

- **Resume normal daily activities** as tolerated.
- **Work Status:** If job demands are met, return to full duty; otherwise, a functional capacity evaluation and work hardening may be needed.
- Healing may take up to a year, so it is advisable to persist with the home exercise program until all recovery goals are reached.