

Arthroscopic Treatment of Post-Traumatic Stiff Elbow

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The purpose of this study was to evaluate range of motion and patient-related outcome after complete arthroscopic release of post-traumatic elbow contracture. Ten consecutive patients who underwent elbow arthroscopy and capsular release were reviewed retrospectively at a minimum follow-up of 1 year. Pain and range of motion were measured. Patient outcome was assessed with the American Shoulder and Elbow Surgeons Elbow Assessment Form. Mean self-reported satisfaction on a visual analog scale was 8.4 out of 10. Flexion increased from a mean of 117.5° to 133°, and extension improved from a mean of 35.4° to 9.3°. In those patients with a preoperative arc of motion improved from 69° to 119°. All patients had improved function after the procedure, with a mean self-reported functional ability score of 28.3 out of 30. There were no neurovascular complications. The improvement in range of motion and functional outcome compares favorably with open-release procedures. Combined with the potential benefits of improved joint visualization and long surgical morbidity, arthroscopic release of post-traumatic elbow contracture appears to be a reasonable alternative to open techniques.