

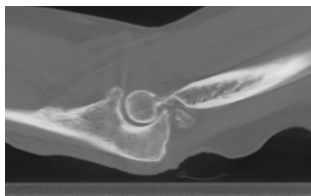


## Surgical Treatment of Elbow Arthritis

### Who is a candidate for surgery?

Patients with elbow pain, loss of motion and mechanical symptoms can benefit from surgical intervention.

**Elbow contracture with osteophytes:** Early on, patients may benefit from an elbow release and removal of osteophytes.



Often, large osteophytes impede the elbow range of motion in both flexion and extension. This can sometimes be done with the arthroscope, often though, the osteophytes are large, and the release is done through

incisions. Elbow release cannot be performed with severe articular or joint degeneration. If the **joint is not smooth**, then removing blocks to motion will not decrease pain. If the joint is smooth, then removing the large osteophytes and releasing the contracted capsule will help.



### What types of procedures are performed?

**1. Arthroscopic removal of loose bodies and elbow contracture release:**

Commonly, those with arthritis have loose pieces of bone in the elbow joint. These cause mechanical symptoms of catching and locking. They also theoretically can cause damage if they get caught in the joint during motion. Arthroscopic removal of the diseased sections can increase motion and decrease pain.



- 2. Open Capsular Release/Removal of Heterotopic Bone:** If the arthritis is extensive or the ulnar nerve is involved, an open release may be planned. The incisions are usually not large unless it is a post traumatic case. Removal of the arthritic spurs can decrease pain at end range of motion. It will not slow the progression of arthritis.

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