



## ACL HEALING RESPONSE POST-OPERATIVE PROTOCOL

### PHASE I – MAXIMUM PROTECTION

#### WEEKS 0-2

- Brace: 6 weeks, full ROM of brace allowed
- Weight bearing as tolerated with crutch assist for 7-10 days to reduce swelling. The patient may discontinue the crutches when they can ambulate with no limp.
- Range of Motion:
  - Patella mobility
  - Emphasize full extension (avoid hyperextension x 4-6 weeks)
  - Progress to full flexion as tolerated
- Exercises:
  - Quadriceps setting, focusing on VMO
  - Multi-plane straight leg raising
  - Gait training, edema control

### PHASE II – PROGRESSIVE STRETCHING AND EARLY STRENGTHENING

#### WEEKS 2-4

- Range of Motion:
  - Patella mobility and scar massage
  - Full knee extension (avoid hyperextension x 4-6 weeks)
  - Full knee flexion, progress as tolerated
- Exercises:
  - Bilateral closed kinetic chain squatting
  - Multi-plane open and closed kinetic chain hip strengthening
  - Step-up progression
  - Stationary biking
  - Pool program: deep water cycling and straight leg flutter kicks, shallow water walking
  - Proprioception drills

#### WEEKS 4-6

- Exercises:
  - Advance strengthening program progressing to unilateral as tolerated
  - Increase intensity of stationary bike program, may add treadmill walking and/or elliptical

### PHASE III – ADVANCED STRENGTHENING AND PROPRIOCEPTION PHASE

#### WEEKS 6-10

- Brace: wean out as tolerated
- Range of Motion:
  - Full knee flexion and hyper-extension with terminal stretch (active and passive)



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- Exercises:
  - Advance intensity of cardiovascular program; no running
  
  - Increase intensity of closed kinetic chain exercises
  - Advance proprioception drills
  
  - Gym program – no extensions
  - Begin lateral functional cord work; no rotation

**WEEKS 8-10**

- Exercises:
  - Pool running program