



ACL RECONSTRUCTION POST-OPERATIVE PROTOCOL

PHASE I – MAXIMUM PROTECTION

WEEKS 0-2:

- Brace – 6 weeks, open from 0-120°
- Weight bearing as tolerated with crutch support for 7-10 days to reduce swelling. The patient may discontinue the crutches when they can ambulate with no limp
 - GOAL=Increase Range of Motion:
 - Patella mobility
 - 90° – 100° of knee flexion, progressing to full as tolerated
 - Progress to full flexion as tolerated
 - Exercises:
 - Quadriceps setting, focusing on VMO
 - Multi-plane straight leg raising
 - Gait training

PHASE II – PROGRESSIVE STRETCHING AND EARLY STRENGTHENING

WEEKS 2-4:

- Range of Motion:
 - Full knee extension/hyperextension
 - Knee flexion to 120°, 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 when incisions healed; focus on ROM
 - Proprioception drills

WEEKS 4-6:

- Range of Motion:
 - Full knee flexion and extension
- Exercises:
 - Advance strengthening program progressing to unilateral as tolerated
 - Increase intensity of stationary bike program, may add treadmill walking and/or elliptical
 - Advance intensity of pool program; focus on strengthening

PHASE III – ADVANCED STRENGTHENING AND PROPRIOCEPTION PHASE

WEEKS 6-12:

- Brace: wean out of brace as tolerated
- Range of Motion:



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- Full knee flexion and extension with terminal stretch

- Exercises:
 - Gym strengthening progressing from bilateral to unilateral as tolerated: Leg press, squats, partial lunges, hamstring curls, ab/adduction, calf raises
 - Multi-directional functional cord work; no rotation or running

WEEKS 8-12:

- Pool running program

PHASE IV – ADVANCE STRENGTHENING AND RUNNING PROGRESSION

WEEKS 12-16:

- Implement a full gym strengthening program; including leg extensions at 30° – 0°
- Begin straight plane running
- Fit functional brace in clinic with physician when strength at least 90% of baseline

PHASE V – RETURN TO SPORT AND FUNCTIONAL DRILLS PHASE

WEEKS 16-20:

- Sprinting
- Sport specific drills
- Plyometric drills – bilateral advancing to unilateral as tolerated

WEEKS 20-24:

- Follow-up examination with the physician
- Sports test for return to competition at 6 months