POSTERIOR CRUCIATE LIGAMENT (PCL) RECONSTRUCTION REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

The following is a protocol for postoperative patients following PCL reconstruction. The primary goal of this protocol is to protect the reconstruction while steadily progressing towards and ultimately achieving pre-injury level of activity. Please note this protocol is a guideline. Patients with additional surgery (i.e. collateral ligament repair, meniscal repair) will progress at different rates. Achieving the criteria of each phase should be emphasized more than the approximate duration. If a patient should develop an increase in pain or swelling or decrease in motion at any time, activity should be decreased until problems are resolved.

PHASE I: 0-2 WEEKS POSTOPERATIVE

GOALS:
- AAROM 0-45 degrees
- Good quad control

AMBULATION, DRESSING, AND BRACE USE
Dressing – POD 1: Debulk dressing, TED Hose in place
– POD 2: Change dressing, keep wound covered, continue TED Hose
– POD 7-10: Sutures out, D/C TED Hose when effusion resolved
Brace x 3 months – Locked in extension x 8 weeks
Crutches – Partial weight bearing (PWB) in brace

EXERCISES:
AAROM – 0-45 degrees
Patellar mobilization (teach patient)
Calf pumping
Passive extension to 0 degrees, no hyperextension
– Calf (not heel) on bolster or prone hangs with tibia supported
Electrical stimulation in full extension with quad sets
Quad sets, Co-contractions quads / HS
Straight leg raise (SLR) x 4 on mat in brace (parallel bars if poor quad control)
Ice Pack with knee in full extension after exercise

PHASE II: ~2-4 WEEKS POSTOPERATIVE

GOALS:
- AAROM 0-45 degrees
- No extensor lag

AMBULATION AND BRACE USE
Brace x 3 months – Locked in extension x 8 weeks
Crutches – PWB in brace

EXERCISES:
Continue appropriate previous exercises
AAROM – 0-60 degrees
No Hamstring curls or Stationary bike x 8 weeks
Scar massage when incision healed
SLR x 4 on mat in brace – Add light weight above knee if good quad control
Double leg heel raises in brace (supported in parallel bars)
Weight shifts, Mini squats 0-30 degrees, in brace (supported in parallel bars)
Stretches – AT, hip flexors, ITB
– Hamstring with leg supported in brace

PHASE III: ~4-6 WEEKS POSTOPERATIVE

GOALS:
- AAROM 0-60 degrees
- No effusion

AMBULATION AND BRACE USE:
Brace x 3 months – Locked in extension x 8 weeks
Crutches – PWB in brace
Continue appropriate previous exercises
AROM by patient 0-60 degrees
No Hamstring curls or Stationary bike x 8 weeks
Multiple-angle Co-contractions quads / HS at 0, 20, 40, 60 degrees
SLR x 4 on mat, out of brace, no weights

PHASE V: ~6-8 WEEKS POSTOPERATIVE
GOAL: AAROM 0-90 degrees

AMBULATION AND BRACE USE:
Brace x 3 months – Locked in extension x 8 weeks
Crutches – Weight bearing as tolerated (WBAT)

EXERCISES:
Continue appropriate previous exercises and the following ex without brace
AROM, AAROM 0-90 degrees
No Hamstring curls or Stationary bike x 8 weeks
SLR x 4 on mat with light weight below the knee
SAQ – 0-30 degrees over bolster with light ankle weights
Double leg heel raises
Wall squats 0-45 degrees
Leg press 0-45 degrees with resistance no more than ¼ body weight
Forward, retro and lateral step downs in parallel bars (small step)
Proprioceptive training – Single leg standing in parallel bars
– Double leg BAPS in parallel bars
Elliptical trainer – No resistance

PHASE VI: ~8-12 WEEKS POSTOPERATIVE
GOALS:
• AROM 0-110 degrees
• Normal gait

AMBULATION AND BRACE USE:

Brace x 3 months – Open to available range
Crutches – D/C when gait is normal

EXERCISES:
Continue appropriate previous exercises
AROM, AAROM 0-110 degrees
Forward, retro and lateral step downs – medium step
Single leg heel raises
Leg Press – 0-60 degrees with resistance up to ½ body weight
Hamstring curls – 0-60 degrees, with ankle weights prone or in standing
– Progress to weight machine, 0-60 degrees (up to ¼ body weight)
Hip weight machine x 4 bilaterally
LAQ 0-60 degrees over bolster or side of mat with ankle weights
Proprioceptive training – Single leg BAPS, ball toss and body blade
Stationary bike for ROM – No resistance
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Treadmill – Forwards and backwards walking
Elliptical Trainer with minimal resistance
Pool therapy – Walking / running (no kicking)

PHASE VII: ~3-4 MONTHS POSTOPERATIVE
GOALS:
• Full ROM
• Walk 2 miles at 15 min/mile pace

AMBULATION AND BRACE USE:
D/C ROM brace
Functional brace per surgeon

EXERCISES:
Continue appropriate previous exercises with progressive resistance
PROM, AAROM, AROM to regain full motion
Leg press 0-90 degrees with resistance as tolerated
Hamstring curl weight machine 0-90 degrees with low weight and high reps
Knee extension weight machine through full range with resistance as tolerated
Fitter
Slide board
Stationary bike – Progressive resistance and time
Elliptical trainer for progressive resistance and time
Treadmill – Walking progression program
Pool therapy – Swimming laps

PHASE VIII: ~4-6 MONTHS POSTOPERATIVE

GOAL: Run 2 miles at easy pace

EXERCISES:
Continue appropriate previous exercises
Agility drills / Plyometrics
Sit-up progression
Treadmill – Running progression program
Quad stretches
Transition to home / gym program

*Return to all activities at 9 months post op.*
*No contact sports until 9 months post-op*