

Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center ORTHOPAEDICS

Physical Therapy Protocol

ACL Reconstruction

Patient Checklist

Weightbearing:

- WBAT post op day 1
- Discontinue crutches when they have a normal gait pattern

Bledsoe brace:

• Unlock after pt has quad control

General Guidelines:

- Ice & elevation 3x a day for 15 minutes with leg elevated
- Low load long duration knee
 extension stretching during icing until full knee extension
- No isolated hamstring flexion for 12 weeks with hamstring graft

Questions?Orthopaedics: (603) 650-5133

Rehabilitation Medicine: (603) 650-3600

Phase I: 0-2 Weeks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	16	20	24
Knee extension stretching														
Progressive knee flexion ROM/stretching										•	•			
Patellar mobs/soft tissue		•												•
Isometric quads/hamstrings														•
Ankle pumps														
Stretch major muscle groups														
SLR 4 ways		•								•				
Bridges										•	•			•
Terminal knee extension										•	•			•
Hamstring curls (defer isolated hamstring contraction for 12 weeks with hamstring graft)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Stationary bike														•
EMS muscle re-education							•	•						

Phase II: 2-6 Weeks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	16	20	24
Continue ROM exercises (as needed)														
Isometric quads at varying degrees of flexion														
CKC double leg exercises														
Proprioceptive training														
Calf raises														
Bilateral leg press														
Core conditioning program														
Progress gym based strengthening														
CKC single leg progression														
Step ups/downs														
Lateral step up and downs														
■ Single leg squats														

Phase III: 6-12 Weeks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	16	20	24
Continue strengthening through increased load									•		•			•
Lunges							•		•		•			•
Resisted knee extension 90-45°									•					•
Perturbation training									•					•
Hopping progression from bilateral to unilateral											•			
Jump rope														

Phase IV: Return to Sports >12 Weeks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	16	20	24
Resisted knee extension through full range											•			
Bilateral plyometrics														
Running progression											•			
Sport test exercises											•			
Advance plyometrics (hop test/sprinting)														
Multi-plane agility/running patterns (beginning @ 50% speed)														•
Sport specific drills														•



Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center orthopaedics

Physical Therapy Protocol

ACL Reconstruction

Phase I: 0-2 Weeks

Goals:

- Crutch Use: WBAT- progress from crutches when able with normal gait to straight let raise without leg
- Brace Use/Ambulation: Unlock brace when able to perform straight leg raise without lag
- Minimize Pain and Effusion Compression wrap, elevation, ice
- Maintain Full Knee Extension and progress knee flexion
- Restore Quad Activation

Exercises:

- Knee PROM with goal of full extension to contralateral knee
- Progressive quad strengthening
- Proprioceptive training

Phase II: 2-6 Weeks

Goals:

- Crutch use: Wean, discontinue crutches when able
- Minimize Effusion and Pain
- Promote Knee Flexion:
 a) 90° by end of week 2
 b) >130° by end of week 6

Exercises:

- Stationary Bike for ROM
- Progress strengthening both CKC & OKC
- Progress proprioceptive training

Phase III: 6-12 Weeks

Goals:

- Full RON
- Enhance Strength during ADLs
- Enhance Proprioception/Balance
- Improve Local Muscular Endurance
- Initiate Cardiovascular training

Exercises:

Progress to gym based strengthening

Phase IV: Return to Sports >12 Weeks

Goals:

- No pain with ADLs
- Gradual Return to unrestricted sports at 24 weeks if following criteria are met:
 - Return to sport test

Exercises:

- Initiate running program
- Begin bilateral low level plyometrics and progress as able
- Begin agility drills and sport specific activities as able
- Pass return to sport test (at 24 weeks post op)
- Acceptable scores on subjective measures (ACL-RSI, TSK-11)

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