

ACL HEALING RESPONSE POST-OPERATIVE PROTOCOL

| | Time Frame (Weeks) | Guidelines | Goals |
|-----------|--------------------|--|---|
| PHASE I | 0 to 2 | <p>BRACE: 0°-90° x 6 weeks CRUTCHES: WBAT 7-10 days; discontinue when patient can ambulate without a limp</p> <p>EXERCISE PROGRESSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gait training • Extension - heel props for full extension • Flexion - off table or wall slides • Quadriceps setting using NMES as needed • Multi-plane straight leg raises • Mini-squat and step-up progression after week 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce inflammation • Normalize patella mobility with manual mobilizations • Full extension both passive and active (No hyperextension x 4-6 weeks) • Good quadriceps activation • No extension lag with straight leg raise • Knee flexion full as tolerated |
| | 2 to 4 | <p>EXERCISE PROGRESSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilateral closed kinetic chain squatting • Multi-plane open/closed kinetic chain hip strengthening • Step-up progression • Proprioception drills <p>CARDIOVASCULAR EXERCISE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stationary biking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce inflammation • Normalize • Full knee extension • No extension lag • Full knee flexion |
| PHASE II | 4 to 6 | <p>EXERCISE PROGRESSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double leg and single squats • Lunges progression as tolerated <p>CARDIOVASCULAR EXERCISE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stationary biking • Treadmill/outdoor walking, focus on proper gait mechanics • Elliptical | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full knee extension/hyperextension • Knee flexion to full as tolerated • Normalize gait mechanics • Normalize patellofemoral joint and scar mobility |
| | 6 to 10 | <p>EXERCISE PROGRESSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance intensity of cardiovascular program; no running • Increase intensity of closed kinetic chain exercises • Advance proprioception drills • Gym program – no extensions • Pool program: deep water cycling and straight leg flutter kicks, shallow water walking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce inflammation • Full ROM and hyperextension with terminal stretch; active and passive • Normal gait |
| PHASE III | 10 to 16 | <p>EXERCISE PROGRESSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement full gym strengthening; Including leg extension • Basic ladder series • Linear running • Plyometric exercises | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a full gym strengthening program • Fit functional brace |
| | 16 to 20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional brace use for sports specific drills • Sprinting • Field drills– lateral and rotational • Follow up examination with physician • Sports test for return to sport | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish RTA |