



Brian P. Davis, MD
ABOS Board-Certified Sports Medicine,
Shoulder, Knee, & Elbow Surgeon
office: 303.321.1333
BrianDavisMD.com

Physical Therapy Non-Operative Protocol Degenerative Joint Disease (Knee)

Phase I – Inflammatory Phase:

- Modalities to control inflammation
 - Prescription anti-inflammatories
 - Ice
 - Clinical modalities as needed
- Evaluate and treat lumbar, sacral, and pelvic dysfunction
- Evaluate for corrective orthotics
- Implement appropriate, selective stretching
 - Iliotibial band
 - Hamstrings
 - Quadriceps
 - Gastrocnemius/soleus
 - Piriformis
- Apply appropriate patella mobilizations
 - Evaluate lateral retinaculum and apply patellar tilt mobilization when indicated
- Begin early VMO/quadriceps strengthening
 - Quad setting
 - Multi-plane straight leg raising
 - Open kinetic chain multi-plane hip strengthening
- Cardiovascular exercise
 - Stationary bike
 - Modify weight bearing activities
- Initiate aquatic exercise and walking program at chest level water progressing to waist level as tolerated

Phase II – Subacute and Early Strengthening Phase:

- Continue with appropriate Phase I activities progressing as tolerated
- Advance strengthening program
 - Proprioception
 - Use caution with closed kinetic chain exercise

Phase III – Advanced Strengthening:

- Continue with consistent stretching and phase I/II exercise program
- Begin gym strengthening as appropriate
- Advance light weight bearing cardiovascular exercises (walking/elliptical trainer)

This protocol is intended to provide a general guideline to treating degenerative joint disease of the knee. Progress should be modified on an individual basis.

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