

Posterior Cruciate Ligament (PCL) Reconstruction Post-Op Protocol

Overview

- Focus on protection of graft and fixation in primary phases (Weeks 0 -12)
- For PCL reconstruction with ACL reconstruction and/or meniscal/cartilage repair, defer to precautions in each protocol.
- The physician may alter time frames of brace-wear and use of crutches
- Supervised Physical Therapy for 4-6 months

General Guidelines

- Ok to shower on Post-op day 5. NO bathing/soaking knee for 6 weeks.
- Brace guidelines: Locked in full extension for 1st 4 weeks. From Week 4-6, unlocked only with gait training or exercise. From Weeks 6-8, begin unlocking brace gradually from Week 1 - Week 6 (15°-20° every 2-3 days, fully unlocked by Week 8). Discontinue brace after Week 8
- Weight-bearing as tolerated by end of Week 1/start of Week 2

Phase I: Week 0-4

Weight-bearing

- WBAT with crutches
- Modified with meniscus repair/transplantation, articular cartilage procedure, or posterolateral corner reconstruction
- Restore normal gait on level surfaces

Brace (Total Length = 6 weeks):

- Week 1: Brace locked in full extension for ambulation and sleeping
- Weeks 2-4: Locked in full-extension for ambulation. Remove for exercise or with PT only.

ROM:

Week 1: None

Weeks 2 - 4: Passive only to tolerance.

- Maintain anterior pressure on proximal tibia as knee is flexed to prevent posterior sagging at all times

Exercises:

- Ankle pumps
- Hip abduction and adduction
- Hamstring/calf stretch, calf press with T-band progressing to standing toe raises with full knee extension
- Standing hip extension
- Quad sets
- SLR all planes (Brace on in full extension)

Phase II: Weeks 5-12

Weight-Bearing:

- WBAT with crutches
- Gradually discontinue after 6 weeks
- Normal gait on level surfaces

Brace:

- 4-6 weeks: Unlocked for gait training
- 6-8 weeks: Unlocked for all activities
- 8 Weeks: Discontinue TROM

ROM and Exercises:

- Maintain full extension and progressive flexion

Weeks 4 – 8:

- Gait training
- Wall Slides and Mini Squats
- Resisted hip exercises while standing – Resistance above knee with hip abduction and adduction exercise

Weeks 8-12:

- Stationary Bike with light resistance (seat higher than normal)
- Closed-chain terminal knee extension
- Balance and proprioceptive activities
- Maintain flexibility
- Leg press (limit knee flexion to 90°)

Phase III: Weeks 13-9 months

Weight-bearing/Gait:

- Full without use of crutches
- Normal gait pattern

Brace and ROM:

- Brace discontinued
- Full and pain-free range of motion

Exercises:

- Advance closed chain strengthening
- Progress proprioception and balance activities
- Maintain flexibility
- Begin treadmill walking to jog progression

Phase IV: Months 9-On

- Full weight-bearing, Functional brace if provided
- Full, pain-free ROM

Exercises:

- Maintain strength and endurance
- Initiate plyometric program as appropriate for patient's athletic goals
- Begin Sport-Specific functional progression. including:
- Agility progression including, but not limited to: Side steps and Crossovers Figure 8, backward & shuttle running One leg and two leg jumping Cutting, Acceleration/Deceleration, and ladder drills
- Continue progression of running distance
- Initiate sport-specific drills as appropriate for patient Document Title