

ACL REHABILITATION PROTOCOL
(with meniscus repair)
(WITHOUT MICROFRACTURE, EXCEPT RADIAL TEARS OR ROOT AVULSION)

Dr. Bienz
(05/12)

I. Preoperative

- a. Rest, ice, compression, elevation
- b. NSAID, pref. Celebrex 200mg BID-2 if early surgery planned
- c. Bledsoe style brace for concomitant gr III MCL injury if present
- d. Fit with functional brace, CTi2 or equivalent, preop use recommended
- e. AROM to regain full mobility, call MD if mechanical block, if there is a known displaced meniscus tear, not ROM therapy, earlier operation planned
- f. Quad isometrics
- g. WBAT if no locked meniscus and no gross osteochondral injury
- h. Preop formal P.T. optional but useful to speed readiness of knee for surgery

DOS: _____

II. First postop week, begin POD #1

- a. Rest, ice compression wrap, elevation
 - i. Dressing change ok after POD #2
 - ii. Elevation with knee in maximal extension optimal as much as tolerated (i.e. pillows under calf or heel, not knee crease)
- b. Ankle AROM as much as possible
- c. Quad isometrics with knee in full passive extension
- d. Straight leg raise ok in brace only (locked in full extension)
- e. Gastroc isometrics
- f. Patellar mobilization as soon as pain permits
- g. Supine heel slides with terminal stretch to increase flexion to full, avoid end range passive stretching in flexion
- h. Sit and allow knee flexion over edge of table to facilitate flexion to 90° (but not beyond)
- i. Supine knee passive extension with wedge under heel to promote full hyperextension
- j. Gait training WBAT with brace locked in full extension
- k. Must sleep in brace

III. Second through fourth postop weeks Begin Date: _____

- a. Same as first week, primary emphasis on increasing ROM (full hyperextension)
- b. Continue crutches with brace locked at 0, WBAT
- c. Add supine SLR out of brace when able to do so with no extensor lag
- d. Side lying SLR begins
- e. Must sleep in brace

IV. Weeks five through six Begin Date: _____

- a. Progress ROM to full, including flexion
- b. Rehab brace open 0 to 90°, may wean from nighttime brace use as tolerated
- c. More aggressive patellar mobilization
- d. May begin stationary cycle, no resistance
- e. Progress to full WBAT
- f. Transition to functional knee brace at 6 weeks postop if swelling permits

V. Weeks seven through twelve Begin Date: _____

- a. Continue aggressive terminal stretching, should be full AROM early in this time frame (except possibly full flexion)
- b. Begin treadmill, add incline progressively up to 7-10°, backwards treadmill ok
- c. Gradually increase resistance and endurance on stationary cycle
- d. Light sport cord or theraband resisted closed kinetic chain resistance training
- e. May transition to high rep, low resistance weight training after 2 full months postop, if motion full. No open chain knee extension, no flexion greater than 90° during strength exercises
- f. Quarter squats ok, no knee flexion angle greater than 90°
- g. Continue functional knee brace full time except sleep
- h. Begin stork stands for proprioception

VI. Weeks twelve through sixteen Begin Date: _____

- a. As above for stretching
- b. Increases resistance training, closed chain. Lunges, leg press, calf press, mini-squats, HS curls
- c. Sport cord resisted forward, backward, and lateral movement
- d. May cycle outside in brace (road only, must remain seated in saddle)
- e. Light jogging in brace
- f. Add slide board and advanced proprioceptive training
- g. No brace needed except for workouts
- h. May begin golfing in brace (chip and putt)
- i. Increase intensity and duration of cardio training
- j. Stair stepper, precor, cardioglide ok

VII. Weeks seventeen through twenty-four Begin Date: _____

- a. Add plyometrics
- b. Hill training with jogging and bicycle
- c. Figure 8 runs, controlled intro to cutting maneuvers and sport specific activities in noncontact, noncompetitive environment
- d. Advanced strength, proprio and cardiovascular conditioning

VIII. Return to sport criteria Begin Date: _____

- a. MD clearance
- b. Sports test 20/21 or better
- c. Single leg hop equal to contralateral
- d. Adequate stability on ligament testing
- e. No significant effusions or mechanical symptoms

- f. Completed sport-specific functional progression
- g. Functional knee brace for contact sports, jumping and landing or cutting and twisting until 1 year postop, then D/C