
Meniscus Repair Rehabilitation (Peripheral Tears)

I. PHASE I: MAXIMUM PROTECTION PHASE (Weeks 1-4)

Goals: Control inflammation/effusion
Allow early healing
Full passive knee extension
Gradually increase knee flexion
Independent quadriceps control

Stage 1: Immediate post-surgery days 1 through 10

- Ice, compression, elevation
- Brace locked at 0 degrees for ambulation and sleeping only
 - Brace may be unlocked while sitting, etc.
- ROM (passive 0-90)
- Patellar mobilizations
- Stretch hamstrings and calf
- Strengthening exercises:
 - Quad sets
 - SLR flexion
 - Hip Abd/Adduction
 - Knee extension 60-0 degrees
- Weight bearing: 25-50% WB as tolerated with 2 crutches
 - Avoid active knee flexion

Stage 2: Weeks 2 through 4

- Continue use of ice and compression
- Brace locked for ambulation
- ROM guidelines
 - Gradually increase PROM
 - Week 2: 0-100/105 degrees
 - Week 3: 0-115/120 degrees
 - Week 4: 0-125/135 degrees
- Weight bearing guidelines → continue to lock brace
 - Week 2: 50% WB
 - Week 3: FWB as tolerated

*Discontinue crutches when safe and proper gait (usually 3-4 weeks)

- Continue PROM exercises and stretching
- Strengthening exercises
 - Multi-angle quad isometrics
 - SLR (all 4 planes)
 - Knee extension 90-0 degrees
 - CKC mini-squats 0-45 degrees
 - CKC wall squats
 - CKC weight shifts (diagonal)
- Balance training (cup walking)

- Bicycle (once ROM appropriate)

*Avoid twisting, deep squatting and stooping

*Avoid hamstring curls

II. PHASE III: MODERATE PROTECTION PHASE (Weeks 5-8)

Goals: Full PROM
No swelling/inflammation
Re-establish muscle control
Proper gait pattern

- Continue use of ice and compression as needed
- Continue ROM and stretching to maintain 0-135 degrees
- Progress strengthening exercises
 - Leg press 70-0 degrees
 - Knee extension 90-40 degrees
 - Hip Abd/Adduction
 - Wall squats 0-70 degrees
 - Vertical squats 0-60 degrees
 - Lateral step-ups
- Balance/proprioception training
 - Biodex stability
 - Squats rocker board
 - Cup walking
- Bicycle (if ROM permits)
- Pool program
- Discontinue brace at weeks 4-5

*Avoid twisting, pivoting, running and deep squatting

III. PHASE III: CONTROLLED ACTIVITY PHASE (Weeks 9-16)

Goals: Improve strength and endurance
Maintain full ROM
Gradually increase applied stress

Week 9

- Continue all strengthening exercises listed above
- Initiate light resisted hamstring curls
- Initiate stair stepper
- Toe calf raises
- Progress balance training
- Progress to isotonic strengthening program

Week 12

- Continue strengthening and stretching program
- Initiate pool running

IV. PHASE IV: RETURN TO ACTIVITY PHASE (Months 4-6)

Goals: Improve strength and endurance
Prepare for unrestricted activities

Criteria to progress to Phase IV

- Full non-painful ROM
- No pain or tenderness
- Satisfactory clinical exam
- Satisfactory isokinetic test

Exercises

- Continue and progress all strengthening exercises and stretching drills
- Deep squatting permitted at 4 months
- Initiate straight line running: 4 months
- Initiate pivoting and cutting: 5 months
- Initiate agility training: 5 months
- Gradually return to sports: 6 months