

Posterior Cruciate Ligament (PCL) Reconstruction Protocol

Your Logo

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Initial precautions:

Avoid knee hyperextension for 12/52 and isolated hamstrings work for 16/52.

Brace should be worn for 6 months at all times except showering and changing clothes.

0 - 6 Weeks

- Pain relief and swelling management (POLICE).
- Fit with PCL brace ASAP.
- NWB for 6/52 in PCL brace.
- In prone only: Gentle passive knee ROM (0-90°) for 2/52, then FROM as able.
- TAQ's, SLR, Hip Add and Abd maintenance exercises.
- Patella mobilisation (superior/inferior, medial/lateral).
- Gentle gastrocnemius stretches.

6 - 12 Weeks

- Continue with previous exercises and add gentle hamstrings stretches.
- WBAT in PCL brace as able if no limp.
- Double legged open kinetic chain (OKC) quads and closed kinetic chain (CKC) exercises <70° knee flexion (3 sets of 20 reps).
- ROM exercises can now be performed in supine.
- Hamstrings bridges on gym ball with knees extended.
- Static bike (no resistance) when sufficient ROM.
- Proprioception and heel raises once FWB.

12 - 18 Weeks

- Progress exercises to single leg (leg press, step ups, side dips etc)
- Progressive increase of resistance and duration on static bike
- Progress strength exercises beyond 70° knee flexion **from week 16**
- Single leg bridges with knee flexed to 90° **from week 16.**
- Start isolated OKC hamstrings exercises **from week 16**

19 - 25 Weeks

- Strength bias ex's (3 sets of 8-12 reps).
- Discontinue PCL brace **from week 24.**

25 Weeks +

- Start jogging if sufficient strength and stability with functional exercises and quadriceps girth >90% of uninjured side (measure 15cm above superior border of patella).
- Graduated running program – start with 1 minute run, 4 minute walk (1:4) for 20 minutes. Increase running time by 1 minute each week with subsequent reduction of walk by 1 minute (2:3) so that the patient should be able to run for 20 minutes after 5 weeks.
- Once running program completed progress from single to multi-plane agility exercises.
- Return to training for specific sports.
- Return to contact sports if >90% of good leg for quadriceps/hamstring strength & battery hop tests.

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References:

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Pierce CM, O'Brien L, Griffin LW, Laprade RF. Posterior cruciate ligament tears: functional and postoperative rehabilitation. *Knee Surg Sports Traumatol Arthrosc.* 2013;21(5):1071-84.

