

Posterior Cruciate Ligament Tear (Grade 2-3) Conservative Management Protocol

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Initial precautions:

Avoid knee hyperextension, posterior translation of the proximal tibia, weight bearing knee flexion $>70^\circ$, isolated hamstrings work, kneeling and jogging for 12/52.

Brace should be worn for 4 months at all times except showering and changing clothes.

0 - 6 Weeks

- Pain relief and swelling management (POLICE).
- Fit with PCL brace ASAP.
- PWB for 2/52 then WBAT 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.
- Static bike (no resistance) when sufficient ROM.
- Proprioceptive ex's and heel raises once FWB.

6 - 12 Weeks

- Continue with previous ex's and add gentle hamstrings stretches.
- FWB in PCL brace as able if no limp.
- Double legged OKC quads and CKC ex's $<70^\circ$ knee flexion (3 sets of 20 reps).
- ROM exercises can now be performed in supine.
- Hamstrings bridges on gym ball with knees extended.
- Progressive increase of resistance on static bike.
- Incline treadmill walk (7-12% incline).
- Single leg Romanian dead lift (knee extended).

12 - 18 Weeks

- Discontinue PCL brace at 16 weeks.
- Progress strength exercises beyond 70° knee flexion.
- Start isolated OKC hamstrings exercises.
- Progress ex's to single leg (leg press, step ups, side dips etc).
- Start jogging if sufficient strength and stability with functional ex's 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 ex's.

19 Weeks +

- Strength bias ex's (3 sets of 4-8 reps).
- Return to training for specific sports if firm end point on PCL testing and symmetrical quadriceps strength.
- Return to contact sports if $>85\%$ of good leg on functional testing.



References:

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