



CONWAY ORTHOPEDIC & SPORTS MEDICINE CENTER

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Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) and Posterolateral Corner (PLC) Reconstruction Post-Operative Protocol

Phase I — Maximum protection

Weeks 0–4:

- Nonweight-bearing with crutches
- Brace locked in extension for all mobility, may unlock when seated
- Avoid posterior and externally rotated tibia glides or maneuvers
- Avoid isolated hamstring exercises

Goals

- Reduce inflammation
- Normalize patella mobility with manual mobilizations
- Full extension
- 90°–100° of knee flexion, progressing to full as tolerated

Exercise progression

- Quadriceps setting using NMES as needed
- Multiplane straight leg raising

Weeks 4–6:

- Begin partial weight-bearing at 4 weeks and progress to WBAT by 6 weeks
- Maintain brace use, allow brace to be unlocked with partial ROM as quad control allows

Goals

- Progress off crutches
- Knee flexion to 120°, progress as tolerated
- Normalized gait mechanics
- Reduce inflammation
- Full knee extension
- 100°–120° of knee flexion, progress as tolerated

Phase II — Progressive stretching and early strengthening

Weeks 6–8:

- Wean from brace when gait normalized and quad activation is sufficient

Goals

- Progress closed chain strengthening
- Avoid open chain hamstring resisted exercise x4 months postop
- Eliminate movement dysfunction (i.e. no dynamic valgus at the knee)

Exercise progression

- Bilateral squat progression
- Multiplane open and closed kinetic chain hip strengthening
- Step-up and step-down progression
- Stationary biking and treadmill/outdoor walking
- Proprioception drills
- Increase intensity of stationary bike program, may add elevation to treadmill walking and elliptical

Phase III — Advanced strengthening and proprioception

Weeks 8–12:

Goals

- Progressive strengthening and endurance training

Exercise progression

- Weighted squat progression
- Lunge progression (retro, walk and split) as indicated
- Single limb stability exercises
- Outdoor biking – week 8
- Lateral lunge progression – weeks 8–10
- Shallow water pool running – weeks 8–10

- Swimming freestyle – weeks 8–10
- Backward elevated treadmill walking – weeks 8–10
- Basic ladder series – week 10
- Begin linear treadmill jogging – weeks 10–12

Phase IV — Advance strengthening and running progression

Weeks 12–20:

Goals

- Pass preliminary functional test at >90% (involved versus uninvolved limb)
- See testing protocol

Exercise progression

- Progress resistance with squat and lunge strengthening program
- May add leg extensions at 30° - 0° (exclude patients with patellar or trochlear groove chondral pathology)
- Linear running progression
- Advanced ladder series
- Basic plyometric box progression

Weeks 12–14:

Administer preliminary functional test for physician to review

Phase V — Return to sport

Weeks 20–24:

Exercise progression

- Hurdle and plyo box progressions
- Sport specific field/court drills
- Noncontact drills

Criteria to be released for return to sport

- Follow-up examination with the physician
- Pass return-to-sport functional test at >90% (involved versus uninvolved limb)
- See testing protocol
- Display symmetry and confidence in high-speed cutting, multiplane plyometric drills, sprinting and decelerating