



Austin Cole, MD

Patellar Tendon Debridement/Repair- Abbreviated Post-Operative Protocol

Phase I- Protection/Early ROM

Immediate Post Op:

- Weightbearing- WBAT with hinged knee brace locked in extension, crutches as needed for comfort
- Range of motion- No ROM for 1 week

Weeks 2-3:

- Weightbearing- As tolerated with hinged knee brace locked in extension
- Range of motion- Begin AAROM 0-60 with passive extension (ok to engage some active extension if not painful)
- Ok to unlock brace to get into car
- Wear brace when sleeping
- NWB ROM heel slides
- Work on patellar mobilizations and quad/gluteal sets
- SLR in brace locked in extension

Weeks 4-5:

- Weightbearing- WBAT with brace unlocked (0-45 week 4, 0-90 week 5, depending on quad control)
- Range of motion- Work toward full PROM, AAROM 0-90
- Out of brace for sleeping
- Work on SLR out of brace
- Stationary bike (no deep flexion, minimal resistance)
- Continue patellar mobilizations and quad sets
- Ok for scar massage
- Hip strengthening, specifically external rotators
- Hamstring and calf stretching
- Isotonic leg press (0-60 degrees) in brace
- TheraBand standing terminal knee extension
- Mini squats (0-45 degrees) in brace

Phase II- Progressive Stretching and Early Strengthening

Weeks 6-9:

- Work out of brace with ambulation depending on quad strength and pain around 6-8 weeks (variable)
- Work toward full AROM
- Increase bike resistance
- Elliptical as pain allows
- Isotonic leg press 0-90
- Wall and/or ball squats (0-60)
- 6 inch step-ups, 4 inch step downs
- Begin brisk walking week 9

Phase III- Advanced Strengthening

Weeks 10-12:

- Continue above exercises, increasing ROM and weight as tolerated each week
- Stairmaster machine
- Increase distance of step-ups and step-downs
- Begin jogging/running program (in line, no cutting)
- Begin jumping exercises (double and single leg) as tolerated

Phase IV- Return to Sport

Weeks 12-20:

- Complete return to sport test around 12-14 weeks
- Work into sport specific drills and return to sport program