

**NONOPERATIVE REHABILITATION FOLLOWING
ACL INJURY (3-3-4-4 Program)**

IMMEDIATE INJURY PHASE (Day 1 to Day 7)

Goals: Restore full passive knee extension
Diminish joint swelling and pain
Restore patellar mobility
Gradually improve knee flexion
Re-establish quadriceps control
Restore independent ambulation

Post-Injury Day 1- 3

Brace – brace/Immobilizer applied to knee, locked in full extension during ambulation as directed by physician

Weight Bearing – Two crutches, weight bearing as tolerated

Exercises: *Ankle pumps
 *Overpressure into full, passive knee extension
 *Active and Passive knee flexion (90 degree by day 5)
 *Straight leg raises (Flexion, Abduction, Adduction)
 *Quadriceps isometric setting
 *Hamstring stretches/ calf stretches
 *Closed kinetic chain exercises: mini squats, weight shifts

Muscle Stimulation – Use muscle stimulation during active muscle exercises (4-6 hours per day)

Ice and Elevation – Ice 20 minutes out of every hour and elevate with knee in full extension, may use e-stim for edema control

Post-Injury Day 3 to 7

Brace – EZ Wrap brace/Immobilizer, locked at zero degrees extension for ambulation and unlocked for sitting, Etc., or Protonics Rehab System (PRS) as directed by physician

Weight Bearing – Two Crutches weight bearing as tolerated

Range of Motion – Remove brace to perform range of motion exercises 4-6 times per day, knee flexion 90 degrees by day 5, approximately 100 degrees by day 7

Exercises: *Multi-angle isometrics at 90 and 60 degrees (knee extension)
 *Knee Extension 90-40 degrees
 *Overpressure into extension
 *Patellar mobilization
 *Ankle pumps
 *Straight leg raises (3 directions)
 *Mini squats and weight shifts
 *Standing Hamstring curls
 *Quadriceps isometric setting
 *Proprioception and balance activities
 *Continue Hamstring and calf stretching

Muscle Stimulation – Electrical muscle stimulation (continue 6 hours daily)

Ice and Elevation – Ice 20 minutes of every hour and elevate leg with knee full extension

II. INTERMEDIATE REHABILITATION PHASE (Week 2-4)

Criteria to Progress to Phase II

- 1) Quad Control (ability to perform good quad set and SLR)
- 2) Full passive knee extension
- 3) PROM 0-90 degrees
- 4) Good patellar mobility
- 5) Minimal joint effusion
- 6) Independent ambulation

Goals: Maintain full passive knee extension (at least 0 to 5-7 hyperextension)
 Gradually increase knee flexion
 Diminish swelling and pain
 Muscle training
 Restore proprioception
 Patellar mobility

Week Two

Brace – Discontinue brace or immobilizer at 2 to 3 weeks per physician

Weight Bearing – As tolerated (goal is to discontinue crutches 10-14 days post injury)

Range of Motion – Self-ROM stretching (4-5 times daily), emphasis on maintaining full, passive range of motion progress flexion as tolerated

Exercises:

- *Muscle stimulation to quadriceps exercises
- *Isometric quadriceps sets
- *Straight Leg raises (4 planes)
- *Leg Press (0-60 degrees)
- *Knee extension 90-40 degrees
- *Half squats (0-40)
- *Weight shifts
- *Gait training with cones
- *Front and side lunges
- *Hamstring Curls
- *Bicycle
- *Proprioception training
- *Tilt board squats
- *Dip walking
- *Overpressure into extension
- *Passive range of motion from 0 to 50 degrees
- *Patellar mobilization
- *Well leg exercises
- *Progressive resistance extension program – start with 1 lb., progress 1 lb. per week
- *Continue stretching program

Swelling control – Ice, compression, elevation, e-stim

Week Three

Brace – Discontinue

Range of Motion – PROM should be full or near full ROM

Passive Range of Motion – Continue range of motion stretching and overpressure into extension

Exercises:

- *Continue all exercises as in week two
- *Passive Range of Motion as tolerated
- *Bicycle for range of motion stimulus and endurance
- *Pool walking program (if incision is closed)
- *Eccentric quadriceps program 40-100 (isotonic only)

- *Lateral lunges
- *Lateral step ups
- *Lateral cone step overs
- *Stair-Stepper machine
- *Progress Proprioception drills, neuromuscular control drills

III. **ADVANCED STRENGTHENING/NEUROMUSCULAR CONTROL PHASE (Week 4-8)**

Criteria to Enter Phase III

- 1) Full ROM
- 2) Quadriceps strength 60% > contralateral side (isometric test at 60 degree knee flexion)
- 3) Minimal to no full joint effusion
- 4) No joint line or patellofemoral pain

Goals: Maintain full knee range of motion (0 to 125 degrees)
 Improve lower extremity strength
 Enhance proprioception, balance, and neuromuscular control
 Improve muscular endurance
 Restore limb confidence and function

Brace – No immobilizer or brace, may use knee sleeve or fit for function all brace

Range of Motion – Self-ROM (4-5 times daily using the other leg to provide ROM), emphasis on maintaining full ROM

Week 4

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| Exercises | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Progress isometric strengthening program *Leg Press *Knee extension 90 to 40 degrees *Hamstring curls *Hip Abduction and Adduction *Hip Flexion and Extension *Lateral Step-Overs *Lateral Lunges *Lateral step ups *Front step downs *Wall Squats *Vertical squats *Toe Calf Raises *Biodex Stability System (balance, squats, etc.) *Proprioception drills *Bicycle *Stair Stepper machine *Pool program (backward running, hip and leg exercises) |
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Week 6

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| Exercises: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Continue all exercises *Pool running (forward) and agility drills, jumping *Progress to balance and tilt board throws, perturbation training *Advanced Neuromuscular control drills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -CKC on unstable surfaces -Lunges onto foam -Step ups on foam -Perturbation training *Wall slides/squats *Muscular training for fast reaction times <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High speed hamstring curls *Progress dynamic stabilization drills |
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- Tilt board perturbations

IV. ADVANCED ACTIVITY PHASE (Week 8-12)

Criteria to Enter Phase IV

- 1) Full ROM
- 2) Quad strength 75% of contralateral side, knee extension flexor:extensor ratio 70% to 75%
- 3) No pain or effusion
- 4) Satisfactory clinical exam
- 5) Satisfactory isokinetic test (values at 180 degrees)
 - Quadriceps bilateral comparison 75%
 - Hamstrings equal bilateral
 - Quadriceps peak torque/body weight 65% at 180°/s (males) 55% at 180°/s (females)
 - Hamstrings/quadriceps ratio 66% to 75%
- 6) Subjective knee scoring (modified Noyes System) 80 points or better

Goals: Normalize lower extremity strength
 Enhance muscular power and endurance
 Improve neuromuscular control
 Perform selected sport-specific drills

Exercises: *Continue all exercises
 *Advanced Neuromuscular control drills:
 *Plyometric program
 -Leg press plyometrics
 -Box jumps

V. RETURN TO ACTIVITY PHASE (Month 12-22)

Criteria to Enter Phase V

- 1) Full Range of Motion
- 2) Isokinetic Test that fulfills criteria
- 3) Quadriceps bilateral comparison (80% or greater)
- 4) Hamstring bilateral comparison (110% or greater)
- 5) Quadriceps torque/body weight ratio (55% or greater)
- 6) Hamstrings/Quadriceps ratio (70% or greater)
- 7) Proprioceptive Test (100% of contralateral leg)
- 8) Functional Test (85% or greater of contralateral side)
- 9) Satisfactory clinical exam
- 10) Subjective knee scoring (modified Noyes System) (90 points or better)

Goals: Gradual return to full-unrestricted sports 8 activities
 Achieve maximal strength and endurance
 Normalize neuromuscular control
 Progress skill training

Exercises *Continue strengthening exercises
 *Continue neuromuscular control drills
 *Continue plyometrics drills
 *Progress running and agility program
 *Progress sport specific training