

POST-OPERATIVE REHABILITATION: MENISCAL REPAIR

Therapy Plan: Twice per week for 0-2 months, once per week for 2-4 months

ROM Progression

Passive knee motion for 0-6 weeks after surgery restricted to pain-free range from 0-90 degrees. Progress ROM as tolerated after 6 weeks with the goal of symmetric full motion at 8-10 weeks.

Weight Bearing Progression

Initially 25% weight bearing 0-2 weeks after surgery.

- Progress weight bearing over weeks 2-4 with the goal of removing crutches at 4 weeks
- Do NOT progress to one crutch - gait must be pain free and non-compensatory to remove both crutches
- Brace should remain in place for 6 weeks total

Initial Post-Operative Physical Therapy Visit

- Correctly NON weight bearing with crutches
- Instruct on leg bridge for extension, heel slides for flexion, ankle pumps
- Isometric exercises for core, glutes, quadriceps, hamstrings

Phase 1 Physical Therapy (0-6 weeks): protect the joint, progress ambulation

- NO open-chain exercises
- Manual therapy 20+ minutes per session, stationary bike 20-60 minutes/day (NO resistance)
- Soft tissue mobilization, patellar mobilization, isometric exercises, core strengthening
- Brace locked in extension for ambulation until full control, then may unlock to 0-90 degrees
- Tactile and verbal cueing to enable non-compensatory gait patterning

Phase 2 Physical Therapy (6-12 weeks): progressive strengthening

- Wean out of brace while maintaining non-compensatory gait
- Initiate closed-chain strengthening and planks advancing as tolerated
- Proprioceptive training
- Standing weight shifts, backward/lateral walking without resistance (NO pivoting)
- Soft tissue mobilization, patellar mobilization, isometric exercises, core strengthening
- Initiate step-up and step-down programs

Phase 3 Physical Therapy (12-24 weeks): return to pre-injury level and sport

- Focus on functional exercises in all planes, advance only when fully controlled
- Advance closed-chain and core strengthening
- Proprioceptive training
- Running may start at 12 weeks
- Agility drills and plyometrics may start at 14 weeks
- Full return may take 4-6 months or more