

Meniscal Repair Rehab Protocol

Phase I: Maximum Protection- Weeks 1-6:

Goals:

- Diminish inflammation and swelling
- Restore ROM
- Reestablish quadriceps muscle activity

Stage 1: Immediate Postoperative Day 1- Week 3

- Ice, compression, elevation
- Electrical muscle stimulation
- Brace locked at 0 degrees
- ROM 0-90
 - o Motion is limited for the first 7-21 days, depending on the development of scar tissue around the repair site. Gradual increase in flexion ROM is based on assessment of pain and site of repair (0-90 degrees).
- Patellar mobilization
- Scar tissue mobilization
- Passive ROM
- Exercises
 - o Quadriceps isometrics
 - o Hamstring isometrics (if posterior horn repair, no hamstring exercises for 6 weeks)
 - o Hip abduction and adduction
- Touchdown weight bearing with crutches and brace locked at 0 degrees
- Proprioception training with brace locked at 0 degrees

Stage 2: Weeks 4-6

- Gradually increase to full weight bearing with brace unlocked
- Progressive resistance exercises (PREs) 1-5 pounds.
- Limited range knee extension (in range less likely to impinge or pull on repair)
- Toe raises
- Cycling (no resistance)
- PNF with resistance

- Unloaded flexibility exercises

Phase II: Moderate Protection- Weeks 6-10

Criteria for progression to phase II:

- ROM 0-90 degrees
- No change in pain or effusion
- Quadriceps control (MMT 4/5)

Goals:

- Increased strength, power, endurance
- Normalize ROM of knee
- Prepare patients for advanced exercises

Exercises:

- Strength- PRE progression
- Flexibility exercises
- Lateral step-ups
- Mini-squats at 8-10 weeks (less than 90 degrees)

Endurance Program:

- Swimming (no frog kick), pool running- if available
- Cycling
- Stair machine

Coordination Program:

- Balance board
- Pool sprinting- if pool available
- Backward walking
- Plyometrics

Phase III: Advanced Phase- Weeks 11-15

Criteria for progression to phase III:

- Full, pain free ROM
- No pain or tenderness
- Satisfactory clinical examination
- SLR without lag
- Gait without device, brace unlocked

Goals:

- Increase power and endurance

- Emphasize return to skill activities
- Prepare for return to full unrestricted activities

Exercises:

- Continue all exercises

Return to Activity: Criteria

- Full, pain free ROM
- Satisfactory clinical examination

Criteria for discharge from skilled therapy:

- 1) Non-antalgic gait
 - 2) Pain free /full ROM
 - 3) Quad strength at 80-90% of contralateral side
 - 4) Independent with home program
 - 5) Normal age appropriate balance and proprioception
 - 6) Resolved palpable edema
- Increase plyometrics, pool program
 - Initiate running program
 - No deep squats until 4-6 months