Connecticut Orthopaedics

Megan R. Wolf, MD
Sports Medicine/Foot & Ankle

Meniscus Repair (Peripheral/Vertical)
Post-Operative Protocol

Phase I – Maximum Protection

Weeks 0 to 3:

- Brace - locked in full extension during all ambulation for 3 weeks
  - Can unlock brace to allow 0-90 degrees for unloaded range of motion only
- Use two crutches with touch-down weight bearing (<25% body weight) at all times for 3 weeks
- Limit knee flexion to 90-degrees for 3 weeks

  Goals
  - Reduce inflammation and pain
  - 0 degrees of knee extension

  Exercise progression
  - Emphasize patellofemoral mobilizations
  - Passive/active knee range of motion with 90° flexion limit
  - Quadriceps setting emphasize VMO function
  - Multi-plane straight leg raising
  - Open chain hip strengthening
  - Gait training

Weeks 3-6:

- Brace – open to 0-90 degrees for ambulation
- Continue using two crutches, with gradual progression of weight bearing
  - Increase WB to FWB over next 2 weeks
- Progress as tolerated past 90 degrees of knee flexion

  Goals
  - Reduce inflammation and pain
  - Maintain 0° of knee extension

Phase II – Progressive Stretching and Early Strengthening

Weeks 6 to 8:

- Discontinue brace

  Goals
  - Full knee extension/hyperextension
  - Gradual progression to full knee flexion
  - No swelling
  - Normal gait

  Exercise progression
  - Continue to emphasize patella mobility
  - Begin bilateral closed kinetic chain strengthening (limited range initially)
  - Step-up progression
  - Begin stationary bike with light resistance initially
  - Proprioception drills

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Phase III – Advanced Strengthening and Proprioception

Weeks 8 to 12:

Goals
- Full knee range of motion

Exercise progression
- Avoid rotational movements until 14 weeks
- Begin gym strengthening program
- Advance stationary biking program (increase intensity)
- Introduce treadmill walking and elliptical trainer
- Begin unilateral closed kinetic chain program
- Gym strengthening progression (leg press above 90-degrees, hamstrings curls etc.)

Phase IV – Advanced Strengthening and Plyometric Drills

Weeks 12 to 16:

- Follow-up examination with the physician

Goals
- Pass return-to-sport functional test at > 90% (involved vs uninvolved limb) by 16 weeks

Exercise progression
- Plyometric drills from bilateral to unilateral at 12 weeks
- Linear running progression at 12 weeks
- Progress to lateral and rotational stresses at 14 weeks
- Multi-directional drills at 14 to 16 weeks