



## **Meniscus Repair Rehabilitation (Complex Tears)**

### **PHASE I: MAXIMUM PROTECTION PHASE (1-6 Weeks)**

**Goals:** Control inflammation/effusion  
Allow early healing  
Full passive knee extension  
Gradually increase knee flexion  
Independent quadriceps control

#### Stage 1: Immediate post-surgery days 1 through 10

- Ice, compression, elevation
- Brace locked at 0 degrees for ambulation and sleeping only
  - Brace may be unlocked while sitting, etc.
- ROM (passive 0-90)
- Patellar mobilizations
- Stretch hamstrings and calf
- Strengthening exercises:
  - Quad sets
  - SLR flexion
  - Hip Abd/Adduction
  - Knee extension 60-0 degrees
- Weight bearing: toe touch with two crutches
- Avoid active knee flexion

#### Stage 2: Weeks 2 through 4

- Continue use of ice and compression
- Brace locked for ambulation and sleeping
- ROM guidelines
  - Gradually increase PROM as tolerated
  - Week 2: 0-100 degrees
  - Week 3: 0-110 degrees
  - Week 4: 0-120 degrees
- Weight bearing guidelines → Continue to lock brace
  - Week 2: 25-50% WB
  - Week 3: 50-75% WB
  - Week 4: FWB as toleration
- Continue PROM exercises and stretching
- Strengthening exercises
  - Multi-angle quad isometrics
  - SLR (all 4 planes)
  - Knee extension 90-0 degrees

- CKC weight shifts
- \*Avoid twisting, deep squatting, and stooping  
\*Avoid hamstring strengthening

### Stage 3: Weeks 5-6

- Weight bearing: as tolerated
- Initiate CKC exercise such as:
  - ½ squat 0-45 degrees
  - Leg press 0-60 degrees
  - Wall squat 0-60 degrees
- Initiate proprioception training
  - Tilt board squats
  - Biodex stability
- Continue CKC exercise
- Initiate hip Abd/Adduction and hip flexion/extension on multi-hip machine

## **PHASE II: MODERATE PROTECTION PHASE (Weeks 7-12)**

**Goals:** Establish full PROM  
Diminish swelling/inflammation  
Re-establish muscle control  
Promote proper gait pattern

### Weeks 7-10

- Continue use of ice and compression as needed
- Continue ROM and stretching
  - Week 7: PROM 0-125/130 degrees
- Continue use of brace for 8 weeks
- Progress strengthening exercises
  - Leg press 70-0 degrees
  - Knee extension 90-40 degrees
  - Hip Abd/Adduction
  - Wall squats 0-70 degrees
  - Vertical squats 0-60 degrees
  - Lateral step-ups
  - Front step downs
- Balance/proprioception training
  - Biodex stability
  - Squats rocker board
  - Cup walking
- Bicycle (if ROM permits)
- Pool program

\*Avoid twisting, pivoting, running and deep squatting

### Weeks 10-12

- Continue all exercises listed above
- Initiate "light" hamstring curls
- Initiate toe calf raises

### **PHASE III: CONTROLLED ACTIVITY PHASE (Weeks 13-18)**

**Goals:** Improve strength and endurance  
Maintain full ROM  
Gradually increase applied stress

#### Week 13

- Continue all strengthening exercises listed above
- Initiate stair stepper
- Toe calf raises
- Progress balance training
- Progress to isotonic strengthening program
- Initiate front lunges
- Initiate pool running (forward and backward)
- Initiate walking program

#### Week 16

- Continue strengthening and stretching program
- Progress walking program
- Initiate running and cutting in pool

### **PHASE IV: RETURN TO ACTIVITY PHASE (Months 6-8)**

**Goals:** Improve strength and endurance  
Prepare for unrestricted activities  
Progress to agility and cutting drills

#### Criteria to Progress to Phase IV

- Full non-painful ROM
- No pain or tenderness
- Satisfactory clinical exam
- Satisfactory isokinetic test

#### Exercises

- Continue and progress all strengthening exercises and stretching drills
  - Progress isotonic program
  - Wall squats
  - Leg press
  - Lateral step-ups
  - Knee extensions 90-40 degrees
  - Hamstring curls
  - Hip abduction/adduction
  - Bicycle, stair stepper, elliptical machine
- Deep squatting permitted at 5 ½ months
- Initiate straight line running: 6 months

- Initiate pivoting and cutting: 7 months
- Initiate agility training: 7 months
- Gradually return to sports: 7-8 months

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