Jennifer Thomson, MD
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY | SPORTS MEDICINE

Rehabilitation Protocol:
Anterior Cruciate Ligament Reconstruction; Complex Meniscus Repair

Phase I: 0-6 weeks

- Brace: Locked at 0 degrees extension for ambulation & sleeping
- ROM: 0-90 deg permitted with emphasis on full extension
- Weightbearing: NWB
- Exercises:
-- Patella mobilization
-- Straight leg raise supine with brace locked at 0 degrees
-- Quad sets
-- Ankle pumps
-- Short crank (90mm) ergometry

Phase II: 6-8 weeks

- Brace: Brace may be unlocked for weightbearing, 0-90 deg
- ROM: 0-90 deg permitted when weightbearing; when not weightbearing can progress from 0-120 deg
- Weightbearing: transition to PWB then WBAT
- Exercises:
-- Active knee extension from 40 degrees
-- Standard (170mm) ergometry (if knee ROM >115 degrees)
-- Leg press (80-0 degree arc)
-- Mini squats/weight shifts
-- Proprioception training
-- Initiate step up program
-- Avoid tibial rotation until 6 weeks

Phase III: 8-14 weeks

- Brace: D/C brace and wean from crutches when gait normalized
- ROM: full (but no loading beyond 90 degrees knee flexion)
- Weightbearing: Transition gradually from TTWB to WBAT
- Exercises:
-- Progressive squat program
-- Initiate step down program
-- Leg press, lunges
-- Isotonic knee extension (90-40 degrees, closed chain)
-- Agility exercises (sport cord)
-- Versaclimber/Nordic Track
-- Retrograde treadmill ambulation

Phase IV: 14-22 weeks

- Brace: none
- ROM: full
- Weightbearing: WBAT
- Exercises:

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-- Begin forward running (treadmill) program when 8" step down satisfactory
-- Continue strengthening & flexibility program
-- Advanced sports-specific agility drills
-- Start plyometric program

Phase V: >22 weeks

- Brace: none
- ROM: full
- Weightbearing: WBAT
- Exercises:
-- Advance plyometric program
-- Return to sport-- MD directed, typically 8-9 months postop depending on sport
*May require functional sports assessment prior to clearance to return to sport at ~6 months postoperatively

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