

PT PROTOCOL

Medial Collateral Ligament (MCL) Reconstruction

Rehabilitation Protocol

Weight-Bearing Status

ONLY IF DIFFERENT FROM PROTOCOL BELOW

Weight-bearing status depends on which structures were addressed and any concomitant procedures performed. Follow the weight-bearing status in the phases below unless a different status is indicated here.

☐ Non-weight-bearing ☐ Toe-touch / partial weight-bearing ☐ Weight-bearing as tolerated

Brace / precautions: _____

1

Weeks 0–6

Protect MCL; brace-controlled flexion

2

6 Weeks

Brace/crutches discontinued per criteria; WB as tolerated

3

12 Weeks

Full WB & ROM; begin running straight-ahead

4

Months 5–6

Begin cutting/pivoting; return to sports

Milestones above are goals, not guarantees; progression is criterion-based and depends on the structures addressed.

Phase 1

Weeks 0–6

Weight-Bearing: Partial weight-bearing in brace.

Brace: Hinged knee brace. Locked in full extension for ambulation and sleeping (weeks 0–2); unlocked 0–90° for ambulation, removed for sleeping (weeks 2–6).

Range of Motion: Weeks 0–2: 0–45°. Weeks 2–6: advance slowly to 0–90°.

Therapeutic Exercises

- Quad and hamstring sets and ankle pumps.
- Straight leg raise with brace in full extension, until quad strength prevents an extension lag.
- Side-lying hip and core work.
- Hamstring avoidance until 6 weeks postop.

Phase 2

Weeks 6–12

Weight-Bearing: As tolerated; discontinue crutch use at 6 weeks.

Brace: Discontinue at 6 weeks if no extension lag.

Range of Motion: Advance to full.

Therapeutic Exercises

- Begin toe raises, closed-chain quads, balance exercises, hamstring curls, stationary bike, step-ups, front and side planks.
- Advance hip and core work.

Phase 3**Months 3–6**

Weight-Bearing: Full.

Range of Motion: Full and painless.

Therapeutic Exercises

- Begin stairmaster, elliptical, and running straight ahead at 12 weeks.
- 4 months: begin jumping.
- 5 months: advance to sprinting, backward running, cutting/pivoting/changing direction; initiate plyometric program and sport-specific drills.

Phase 4**Months 6+**

Goal: Return to sports as tolerated.

Therapeutic Exercises

- Maintain strength, endurance, and function — initiate plyometric program.
- Begin cutting exercises and sport-specific drills.
- Return to sports as tolerated.