

PT PROTOCOL

PCL Reconstruction and Medial Collateral Ligament (MCL) Repair/ 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 0-4

Protect grafts; toe-touch WB, limited flexion

2

4-8 Weeks

WB advancing; brace progressively unlocked, then discontinued

3

6 Months

Full WB & ROM; begin jogging

4

9 Months

Begin cutting/sport drills; return to sports

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

Phase 1 Weeks 0-4

Weight-Bearing: Toe-touch with crutches, in full extension.

Brace: Hinged knee brace. Locked in full extension for ambulation and sleeping (weeks 0-1). Locked in full extension for ambulation and sleeping, removed for therapy and home exercises (weeks 1-4).

Range of Motion: Weeks 0-1: none. Weeks 1-2: PROM 0-30°. Weeks 2-4: PROM 0-90°. Maintain anterior pressure on the proximal tibia as the knee is flexed, weeks 1-4, to prevent posterior sag.

Therapeutic Exercises

- Avoid active hamstring activity and active knee extension from 90-70° until postop week 4.
- Quad and hamstring sets and ankle pumps.
- Straight leg raise with brace in full extension, until quad strength prevents an extension lag.
- Hip abduction/adduction – resistance must be proximal to the knee.
- Hamstring/calf stretch: calf press with theraband, progressing to standing toe raises with knee in full extension.

Phase 2**Weeks 4–12**

Weight-Bearing: As tolerated; discontinue crutch use at 6–8 weeks.

Brace: Weeks 4–6: unlocked for gait training/exercise only. Weeks 6–8: unlocked for all activities. Week 8: discontinue brace.

Range of Motion: Maintain full extension; work on progressive knee flexion (goal of 110° by week 6).

Therapeutic Exercises

- Weeks 4–8: gait training, wall slides (0–30°), mini squats (0–30°), leg press (0–60°).
- Weeks 8–12: stationary bike (seat higher than normal), stairmaster, closed-chain terminal knee extension, leg press (0–90°), treadmill walking, balance and proprioception activities.

Phase 3**Months 3–9**

Weight-Bearing: Full.

Range of Motion: Full and painless.

Therapeutic Exercises

- Advance closed-chain strengthening exercises; progressive proprioception/balance activities.
- Maintain flexibility.
- Treadmill walking, progressing to jogging at 6 months.

Phase 4**Months 9+**

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.