This rehabilitation program is designed to return the individual to their full activities as quickly and safely as possible following an ACL reconstruction. Modifications to this guideline may be necessary dependent on physician specific instruction or other procedures performed. This evidence-based ACL reconstruction guideline is criterion-based; time frames and visits in each phase will vary depending on many factors. The therapist may modify the program appropriately depending on the individual’s goals for activity following ACL reconstruction.

This guideline is intended to provide the treating clinician a frame of reference for rehabilitation. It is not intended to substitute clinical judgment regarding the patient’s post-operative care based on exam/treatment findings, individual progress, and/or the presence of concomitant procedures or post-operative complications. If the clinician should have questions regarding post-operative progression, they should contact the referring physician.

**General Guidelines/Precautions:**

* Monitor of patellofemoral irritation and arthrofibrotic knee
* Avoid open chain quadriceps strengthening from 40 degrees to terminal extension until 10-12 weeks for B-T-B grafts and 14-16 weeks for hamstring grafts.
* Follow delayed protocol progression for meniscus repair guidelines with ROM and wt bearing precautions if indicted.
* Avoid isolated hamstring strengthening for 6 weeks post-op with posterior horn meniscus repair and hamstring grafts.
* Dr. Volk: Wear immobilizer at all times for first 2 weeks.
* If patient has a concomitant injury/repair (such as meniscus repair) treatment may vary-consult with physician.
* If autograft used for repair treatment may vary-consult with physician.

Delayed Protocol for ACL with meniscal repair or otherwise specified:

* ROM:
  + 0-90 degrees at week 4
  + 0-120 degrees at week 6
  + 0-135 degrees at week 8
* WB:
  + Dr. Volk: WBAT
  + Dr. Dean:
    - TT to ¼ WB to 2 weeks
    - ½ WB to 4 weeks
    - Full WB at 6 weeks
    - If meniscal repair TTWB 4-6 weeks

Additions to protocol for ACL with MCL repair:

* TTWB with brace locked in extension for 2 weeks
* After 2 weeks, progress to full WB with hinged brace worn during exercise to avoid medial joint stress
* Delay hip adductor strengthening for 4 weeks
* Continue with ACL protocol unless physician specifies otherwise

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Phase** | **Suggested Interventions** | **Goals/Milestones for Progression** |
| **Phase I**  *Week 0-1* | *Therapy:*   * Begin supine exercises including: Ankle pumps, quad sets, heel slides, 4-way SLR * Teach crutches for gait and stairs as needed * Pain and edema control, modalities PRN | *Goals of Phase:*   1. Skin healing 2. 70 degrees PROM |
| **Phase II**  *Weeks 1-4* | *WB Status:*   * B-T-B graft: 50% for first 3 weeks, progress to full   *Therapy:*   * Begin extension stretching with prone hangs and heel props * Aquatic therapy as appropriate * Stationary bike, sweeps to full circles. * Patellar mobilizations * Gait training * B mini squats * B calf raises * 4-way hip strengthening, except no extension for hamstring grafts * Clam, fire hydrant * B leg press, 70-10 degrees * When full wt bearing, progress step-ups * Lunges * Treadmill both forward and backwards, no incline * Balance and proprioception: wt shifting, single leg stance | *Goals of Phase:*   1. Healing 2. Pain and edema control, modalities PRN 3. Full wt bearing by 4 weeks 4. ROM at 2 weeks: from 10-90 degrees 5. ROM at 4 weeks: full extension 6. No restriction on flexion with 7. Ambulation without assistive device when quad control is achieved and gait normalized   *Criteria to Advance to Next Phase:*   1. Healing appropriate for stage to move on. |
| **Phase III**  *Weeks 4-6* | *WB Status:*  WBAT\*  \*WB status and gait progression determined by physician and based on radiographic evidence of implant incorporation.  *Therapy additions:*   * Continue closed chain exercises * Single leg squats to 45 degrees * Lateral step downs * Single leg press, 70-10 degrees * Retro ambulation up to 10% incline * Sport cord resisted retro ambulation and lateral movements. * Core strengthening * Baps * Balance: foam roller, single leg stance with reaches | *Goals of Phase:*   1. Swelling reduction 2. Full ROM 3. Climb stairs reciprocally   *Criteria to Advance to Next Phase:*   1. Normal Gait pattern 2. Pain control 3. Edema managed 4. Full knee extension |
| **Phase IV**  *Weeks 6-10* | *WB Status:*  Full; patient should exhibit normalized gait  Exercise additions:   * Open chain knee ext with proximal pad placement * Treadmill, forward and backwards, on incline of 20% grade * Step-ups progressed to 8 inch as tolerated: forward, lateral and backwards * Slowly progress hamstring strength for hamstring grafts * Shock absorption activities | Goals of Phase:   1. Full ROM 2. Full wt bearing 3. Ability to do 10 controlled single leg squats to 45 degrees   *Criteria to Advance to Next Phase:*   1. Patient to be instructed in appropriate home exercise program |
| **Phase V**  *Weeks 10-16* | Exercise additions:   * Front/back squat * Progress single leg squat * Progress weight with previous exercises * Leg extensions 90-0 * Initiate functional movement progressions * B leg jumps on leg press or total gym, progress to single leg as tolerated to learn controlled land * Side lunges * Lateral shuffles * Jumping rope * Light jogging * B plyometrics: up to 6 inches, on leg press | Goals of Phase:   1. Restore strength. 2. Normal 8” step down. 3. Half speed running 4. Controlled landing from 12 in box bilaterally and 6 in box unilaterally 5. Controlled rotational jumps and landings 6. 25 single leg squats 7. Controlled landing for jumps up to 6 inches 8. Less than 30% difference with single leg press or isotonic testing 9. Less than 25% difference with functional assessment   *Criteria to Advance to Next Phase:*   1. Patient to be instructed in appropriate home exercise program |
| **Phase VI**  *Weeks 16-20* | Exercise additions:   * Twisting jumps * Backwards running up to 20-30% incline * Lateral hops over cones, blocks, etc. * Single leg jumps up to 6 inch box * Figure 8 running * Zigzag cutting (45 degree angles) * Lateral shuffles with resistance | Goals of Phase:   1. Half speed running 2. Normal hip strategy to control LE 3. Adequate shock absorption strategies   *Criteria to Advance to Next Phase:*   1. Discharge to independent exercise program once goals are achieved 2. Patient to be instructed in appropriate home exercise program |
| **Phase VII**  *Weeks 20-24* | Exercise additions:   * Single leg plyometrics * Resisted running * Sport specific training including full speed running, cutting, and stopping. * May require additional bracing before returning to full sports play. Physician to determine * Return to play testing if returning to sport | Goals of Phase:   1. Return to prior level of function.   *Criteria to Return to Play*   1. Pass return to play testing    1. Physician Approval    2. Full ROM    3. No pain or swelling    4. Normal running    5. Adequate drop jump mechanics    6. Adequate lateral shuffle mechanics    7. Adequate cutting mechanics |