

# ACL Reconstruction Protocol

## Immediately post-op (O/P physio arranged for 1/52)

- Cryocuff beneath cricket splint, applied in theatre.
- Swelling management (Cryocuff/elevation).
- Gentle active-assisted knee flexion and extension.
- Patella mobilisation (superior/inferior, medial/lateral).
- TAQ's, SLR. Remove cricket splint once able to SLR.
- WBAT: use EC's until able to walk without a limp.

## Goals

- **Terminal extension ASAP, 90° flexion by 1/52**
- **Control pain and swelling, preserve patellofemoral mobility.**

## 1 week

- Check for evidence of distal neurovascular deficit and infection.
- Continue with patellar and tibiofemoral mobility ex's (include gentle hamstring stretch).
- OKC knee extension **between 90-40°** with no weight.
- CKC (e.g. double legged small knee bends) **between 0-60°** with no weight.
- SLS/proprioceptive ex's once FWB.

## 2-9 weeks

- Start class ex's as able, no resisted hamstrings until week 6 for hamstring grafts.
- Static bike, swimming (avoid breast stroke until 12/52) and treadmill walk from week 3.
- Transfer to class when minimal swelling, full extension, FWB and able to perform all initial level exercises competently.
- Increase OKC extension by 10° each week from week 5 (i.e. 90-0° by week 8)
- Increase CKC flexion to 0-90° from week 8.
- Outdoor cycling and treadmill jog **if no swelling or pain and FROM** from week 8.

**Goals: aim for 120° by 2/52, 130° by 5/52 FROM by 8/52 post op.**

NB: If persistent swelling during this phase, consider hydrotherapy.

## 9-16 weeks

- Add weight for both OKC and CKC ex's from week 9.
- Progress through ACL rehab class ex's as able, outdoor jogging from week 13.

## 16+ weeks

- Progress to ACL advanced class ex's once completed top level of ACL rehab ex's.
- Return to training for specific sports.

## **6 months +**

- Return to contact sports if >85% of good leg on functional testing
- Use ACL-RSI to measure patient's psychological readiness/confidence in RTS.

## **References**

Van Grinsven et al, (2010) Evidence-based rehabilitation following anterior cruciate ligament reconstruction, *Knee Surg Sports Traumatol Arthrosc.* Vol 18, pp 1128-1144.

Risberg et al (2004) A systematic review of evidence for anterior cruciate ligament rehabilitation: how much and what type? *Physical Therapy in Sport.* Vol 5, pp 125-145. *Knee Surg Sports Traumatol Ar*

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