

**Dr. Ernat's Isolated Medial Patellofemoral Ligament Reconstruction  
Post-Operative Protocol**

**May attend up to 1-3 times weekly for 12-16 weeks.**

*Timing of each phase varies based on individual patient factors, length of time immobilized, strength/ROM status, and expected performance/activity demands.*

**PHYSICAL THERAPY (PT):** Schedule for 3-4 days after surgery and try to go at least 1-2 times before you return for your post-op visit in clinic.

**RESTRICTIONS:** No full WB initially. ROM 0°-45° 1-3 wks, flexion to 90° until wk 5. First week should only be PWB w crutches and brace.

**WB / CRUTCHES:** PWB with both crutches post-op with brace on locked in full extension until seen in office for first post-op visit.

**BRACE:** Wear for first 2-3 wks. Then wean wks 3-5 and brace can be used for ambulation otherwise not mandatory. May transition to a patellar stabilizing sport brace thereafter.

**RANGE OF MOTION:** Flexion 0°-45° wks 1-3, goal of 0°-90° by 5 wks. Begin full knee ROM around 6 wks, not concerned about knee stiffness initially. Start gentle patellar mobilization

**STRENGTHENING:** Begin quad sets and SLR post-op day 2-3. Light resistance to progress wks 5-6.

**MODALITIES:** Per PT or ATC's discretion. Ice use 3-5 x/day first 10-14 days then 2-3 x/day wks 1-4 as needed.

**RETURN TO ACTIVITY:** subject to change, based on individual progress.

**Recumbent bike:** 5 weeks

**Elliptical:** 10 weeks

**Planks:** 10 weeks

**Swimming:** 8-10 weeks

**Road bike outside:** 10-12 weeks

**Light jogging:** 3 months

**Running:** 3-4 months

**Golf (chip/putt):** 3 months

**Golf (full swing):** 4 months

**Skiing:** 4 months

**Tennis:** 4 months

**Soccer:** 4 months

**Basketball:** 4 months

**Contact sports:** 4 months

**PHASE I – PROTECTION/RANGE OF MOTION (POST-OP WKS: 0-5)**

*(POST-OP WKS: 0-3)*

- Protect graft, control pain and inflammation.

- Ice 20-30 min., 3-5 x/daily for first 10-14 days then 2-3 x/daily for first 4 wks as needed.
- Range of motion: Flexion 0° – 45°, maintains full extension.
- **Partial weight-bearing day 0 until after first post-op clinic visit.**
- **Wks 2-3:** Weight-bearing as tolerated (WBAT) with crutches in brace.
- Quad sets, SLR in immobilizer, 4-way hip exercises, calf raises.

*(POST-OP WKS: 3–5)*

- 1) Wean brace.
- 2) Protect graft, full extension, progress flexion, control swelling.
- 3) ROM 0° – 90°
- 4) Continue with WBAT in brace until good quad control for WB out of brace.
- 5) Work toward normal gait **around 5-6 weeks.**
- 6) Continue with quad sets, 4-way hip, and calf raises.
- 7) Total Gym level 1-2 OK.

#### **PHASE II – RANGE OF MOTION/LIGHT RESISTANCE** *(POST-OP WKS: 5–6)*

- Full ROM 0° – WNL as tolerated, gradual progression.
- Stationary bike beginning with no resistance then progress as tolerated.
- Begin closed chain double leg strengthening exercises as tolerated.

#### **PHASE III – STRENGTHENING** *(POST-OP WKS: 6–12)*

- Continue with full active and passive range of motion.
- Continue with closed chain double leg strengthening as tolerated.
- General quad strengthening, balance and proprioception exercises.
- Around 10 wks s/p, road bike outside allowed starting on flat ground.

#### **PHASE IV – FUNCTIONAL PROGRESSION** *(POST-OP WKS: 12–16)*

- Strengthen neuromuscular control in functional activities.
- Patient education for return to play.
- May progress to closed chain single leg strengthening as tolerated.
- May begin light functional exercises as tolerated.
- Progress flexibility and strengthening programs.
- Running progression as tolerated.

#### **PHASE V – RETURN TO ACTIVITY/SPORT** *(POST-OP WKS: 16+)*

- If pain free, good strength and functional ROM have been achieved may return to full activity as tolerated.

#### **KEY FOR PATIENTS:**

**POST-OP** = after your surgery

**WB** = weight-bearing

**ROM** = range of motion

**PROM** = passive range of motion, someone else moves you

**AAROM** = active assisted range of motion

**AROM** = active range of motion, you move yourself

**RROM** = resisted range of motion, motion against resistance, strengthening

**SLR** = straight leg raise

**WNL** = within normal limits

