

Post-Operative ACL Rehabilitation Protocol

Phase 1 (Week 1-2): Swelling Reduction, Pain Control, Quadriceps Activation

- **Aims:** Reduce Swelling, Control Pain, Regain Quads Control
- **Weight Bearing as tolerated**
- **Compression + Cryotherapy** (Cold Packs/Active Fluid cooling): reduce haemarthrosis and swelling
- **Ankle Exercises:** for DVT prophylaxis
- **Crutches** for ambulation (weight bearing as tolerated) – aim to discontinue by week 1-2
- **Quadriceps Activation:** straight leg raises
- **ROM:** full extension to maximal pain free flexion

Phase 2 (Week 3-6): Range of Motion and Strengthening

- **Aims:** obtain full ROM, reduce swelling and pain, early muscle retraining
- Swelling control: compression and cryotherapy to continue as required
- **Range of Motion:**
 - o Passive Stretches 4-5 x per day to obtain maximal ROM
 - o Maximal flexion as tolerated with stretches
- **Gait:** work on normalizing gait pattern
- Gentle proprioception activities
- **Swimming with pool buoy**
- Gentle **exercise bike**
- **NO Hamstrings strengthening/resistance**

Phase 3 (Week 6-12): Neuromuscular Retraining and Strengthening

- **Aims:** maintain full knee ROM, improve strength, enhance proprioception, balance and control, improve muscular endurance and confidence
- **Range of Motion:** Restoration of Full ROM
- **Straight Line Running:** Week 6
- **Perturbation Challenges/Training:** Patient on rocker board challenged with instability by Physiotherapist
- **Strengthening Exercises:**
 - o Walking normally but not for exercise
 - o Quadriceps
 - o Cycling with progressive resistance
 - o Wean off pool buoy from 8 weeks
 - o Commence hamstrings strengthening at 8 weeks

Phase 4 (3-6 months): Advanced Retraining

- **Goals:** enhance neuromuscular control, normalise muscle strength, perform selective sports specific drills + agility training
- Continue previous neuromuscular exercises
- Plyometrics from 3 months
- Running: gentle proprioception drills (4 months), agility drills (5 months)
- Side stepping, lateral movements

Phase 5 (6-9 months): Sport Specific Retraining

- Work on sport specific training and drills
- Practice FIFA 11 warm up injury prevention

Phase 5 (9+ months): Sport Recommencement

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- Ease into sports
- Do not play unless confident
- FIFA 11 warm up

If at any time there is increasing pain, catching or locking within the knee please contact Dr Slattery on 98196934 or 0475 582 244.