

University Orthopedics, Inc.  
Sports Medicine Division

## **KNEE ARTHROSCOPY POST-OP REHABILITATION PROTOCOL\*\***

The following is a protocol for postoperative patients following a knee arthroscopy. The primary goal of this protocol is to protect the knee while steadily progressing towards and ultimately achieving pre-injury level of activity. Please note this protocol is a guideline. Patients with additional surgery will progress at different rates. Achieving the criteria of each phase should be emphasized more than the approximate duration. If a patient should develop an increase in pain or swelling or decrease in motion at any time, activity should be decreased until problems are resolved.

### **PHASE I: 1-7 DAYS POSTOPERATIVE**

#### GOALS:

- Pain and swelling controlled
- ROM 0-90 degrees

TED Hose – Continue until swelling resolved

AMBULATION AND BRACE USE:

Crutches – weight bearing as tolerate (WBAT)  
(DC when gait is normal – generally at 3-5 days)

#### EXERCISES:

Patellar mobilization as needed (teach patient)  
Calf pumping AAROM, AROM, heel slides as tolerated  
Quad sets (ESTIM as needed if patient has difficulty initiating a quad contraction)  
Short Arc Quads (0-30 degrees)  
Straight leg raise (SLR) x 4 directions  
Mini squats 0-45 degrees with upper extremity support (table; parallel bars; suspension training systems)  
Hamstring activation: Bridging, standing without resistance  
Double leg heel raises Stationary bike for range of motion  
LE Stretches – HS, Hip Flexors, ITB, gastroc, etc.  
Cold therapy with knee elevated and in full extension after exercise

### **PHASE II: ~1-3 WEEKS POSTOPERATIVE**

#### GOALS:

- Full ROM and Normal gait

TED Hose – Continue until swelling resolved

AMBULATION AND BRACE USE: wean from assistive devices

#### EXERCISES:

Continue appropriate previous exercises  
AAROM, AROM through full range  
Straight leg raise (SLR) x 4  
– Add ankle weights when quad control is maintained  
– Progress to standing with light resistance band  
Hip and core strengthening exercises  
Wall squats 0-60 degrees  
Leg press 0-60 degrees with light resistance  
Hamstring curls on weight machine with light resistance

Forward, lateral and retro step exercise (UE support)  
Single leg heel raises  
Stationary bike – Progressive resistance and time

### **PHASE III: ~3-6 WEEKS POSTOPERATIVE**

#### GOALS:

- Walk 2 miles at 15 min/mile pace
- Stair ambulation without pain or sensation of giving way

#### EXERCISES:

Continue previous exercises with increased range and resistance as appropriate  
Forward, lateral and retro step exercises (med-large step)  
Hip weight machine x 4 bilaterally  
Knee extension weight machine  
Proprioceptive training: single leg balance (eyes open/closed); dynamic UE/LE movement; forgiving surfaces  
Fitter and Slide board  
Treadmill – Walking progression program  
Elliptical trainer  
Pool therapy (complete wound closure)

### **PHASE IV: ~6-10 WEEKS POSTOPERATIVE**

#### GOALS:

- Return to all activities

#### EXERCISES:

Continue appropriate previous exercises  
Agility drills / Plyometrics  
Stairmaster  
Treadmill – Running progression program  
Transition to home / gym program

\*\*This protocol is designed to be administered by a licensed physical therapist and/or certified athletic trainer. Please do not hesitate to contact our office should you have any questions concerning the rehabilitation process.