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Postoperative Rehabilitation Following Medial Patellofemoral Ligament Reconstruction

Phase	Days-Weeks	Goals	Restrictions	Treatment	Clinical Milestones
Phase I Protective Phase	Day 1-Week 6 Weeks 0-2	Protect repair Decrease pain/inflammation Prevent negative effects of immobilization Prevent reflex inhibition	No Brace Knee ROM as tolerated	RICE Gluteal setting Quadriceps setting AAROM as tolerated Patellar mobilization	Full knee extension ROM 0-45 degrees Good quadriceps tone No increase in effusion No increased pain
	Weeks 3-4	Continue as previous Restore arthrokinematics Prevent hypomobility Promote dynamic stability	Knee ROM as tolerated	Exercise as previous Patellar mobilization Scar tissue mobilization Foot and ankle exercises	Previous milestones Patellar mobility 2 quadrants medial and lateral ROM 0-90 Normal gait
	Weeks 5-6	Continue as previous Prevent muscle atrophy Develop neuromuscular control Performance of core stability	No restrictions at this point	Exercises as previous Mini squats Step ups Balance and proprioception	Previous milestones Full weight bearing Full ROM Single leg stance
Phase II Moderate Protection Phase	Weeks 7-12 Weeks 7-9	Continue as previous Progressively restore AROM/PROM to full	None	Exercises as previous Submaximal to maximal Slow speeds to fast speeds	Previous milestones Full non painful ROM Restoration of strength, power and endurance

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				Hip extension Hip abduction Clam exercises	No pain or tenderness
	Weeks 10-12	Continue as previous Maintain full ROM Maintain repair Restore strength and balance	None	Exercises as previous Squats Lunges Leg press Hip hikes Single leg exercises	Previous milestones Full non painful ROM 5/5 Quadriceps, Hamstrings and Hip Strength
Phase III Minimum Protection Phase	Weeks 13-16	Continue as previous Gradual initiation of functional activities	None	Exercise as previous Increase intensity by decreasing repetitions and increasing weight Double-leg jumping in place Double-leg jumping multiple planes	Previous milestones Full balance and proprioception Gradual initiation of functional activities
Phase IV Return to Activity Phase	Weeks 17-21+ Weeks 17-20	Continue as previous Progression of functional activities	None	Exercise as previous Single-leg hopping in place Ladder drills Initiate light interval sports programs	Previous milestones
Discharge	Weeks 21+	Full return to all prior activities	None	Exercises as previous Initiate more single- leg advance plyometric training	Previous milestones

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				Progress interval sports programs	
*Return to Sports	12+ to 24+	Full return to all prior activities	None	Same as above	All previous milestones Functional Testing Bilateral jumping for distance = 100% height Single-leg hop for distance = 80% height for females 90% height for males

*Return to sports activity is on a case-by-case basis. Some athletes are ready after 3 months while others may take 5-6 months. The return to sports phase can be inserted anywhere in the 12+ time frame, dependent on patient presentation and requires the use of common sense and clinical judgement.

AAROM=Active assistive range of motion; DC =Discontinue; RICE=Rest, ice, compression, elevation; ROM=Range of motion