



Physical Therapy Instructions: ACL Reconstruction

The goals of the early rehabilitation after ACL reconstruction are to resume normal daily activities as soon as possible while simultaneously working to regain the full range of motion of the knee and minimizing the atrophy that occurs following the surgical procedure. General principals should be applied while recognizing that treatment for each patient must be individualized. Duration of therapy should be determined by the time necessary to have achieved normal gait, full range of motion, and an understanding of the exercises which can safely regain quadriceps strength. All patients should be strongly encouraged to join a fitness center to have access to exercise equipment after completion of therapy at 4-8 weeks.

Principles:

1. Full weight bearing is encouraged without restriction, with or without meniscal repair.
2. crutches should be used until the patient can demonstrate a reciprocal gait without a limp. Patients should not use one crutch only or a cane, as this may prolong their gait abnormality.
3. Brace wear is for ambulation only, and may be discontinued at when the patient feels confident to walk without brace or crutches
4. No restrictions are placed on flexion or extension, and patients should be assisted in working on passive and active exercises. Early emphasis should be placed on achieving the same degree of hyperextension which is present in the uninvolved knee.
5. Patients have been instructed to perform 100 straight-leg raises minimum per day and to add ankle weights when this is easily achieved.
6. The use of an exercise bicycle should begin as soon as the patient has achieved 90° of flexion. Resistance may begin when the patient is able to ride for a 20 minute period and may increase when the patient can ride for 30 minutes.
7. Weight lifting exercises may start as soon as the patient has adequate leg control, with the exception of *seated knee extensions*, which should not be performed at any time during the rehabilitation period.



8. No running, sports, or sport-specific drills will be instituted during the therapy period.
9. Any problems or questions should be addressed directly to me by telephone.

I have read and received a copy of the above instructions.

Signature of patient or guardian