

Rehabilitation Protocol: Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) Reconstruction with Hamstrings Autograft

Phase I (Weeks 0-4)

- **Weightbearing:** As tolerated with crutches (may be modified if concomitant meniscal repair/meniscal transplant or articular cartilage procedure is performed)
- **Hinged Knee Brace:**
 - Locked in full extension for ambulation and sleeping (**Weeks 0-1**)
 - Unlocked for ambulation and removed while sleeping (**Weeks 1-4**)
- **Range of Motion** – AAROM → AROM as tolerated
- **Therapeutic Exercises**
 - Quad/Hamstring sets and heel slides
 - Non-weightbearing stretch of the Gastroc/Soleus
 - Straight-Leg Raise with brace in full extension until quad strength prevents extension lag
 - **No Hamstring Stretching Until 4 Weeks Post-Op**

Phase II (Weeks 4-6)

- **Weightbearing:** As tolerated -- discontinue crutch use
- **Hinged Knee Brace:** Discontinue brace use when patient has achieved full extension with no evidence of extension lag
- **Range of Motion** – Maintain full knee extension – work on progressive knee flexion
- **Therapeutic Exercises**
 - Closed chain extension exercises
 - Hamstring Stretching, Toe Raises, Balance Exercises
 - Progress to weightbearing stretch of the Gastroc/Soleus
 - Begin use of the stationary bicycle

Phase III (Weeks 6-16)

- **Weightbearing:** Full weightbearing
- **Range of Motion** – Full/Painless ROM
- **Therapeutic Exercises**
 - Begin Hamstring strengthening
 - Advance closed chain strengthening exercises, proprioception activities
 - Begin use of the Stairmaster/Elliptical
 - **Can Start Straight Ahead Running at 12 Weeks**

Phase IV (Months 4-6)

- Continue with strengthening (quad/hamstring) and flexibility
- Begin cutting exercises and sport-specific drills
- Maintenance program for strength and endurance
- **Return to sports at 6-9 months**