



EVANGELISTA ORTHOPEDIC CLINIC

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ACL RECONSTRUCTION POST-OPERATIVE REHABILITATION GUIDELINES

General:

Weight Bearing:

- Weight Bearing as Tolerated (WBAT) after surgery unless otherwise specified

Follow Up:

- Follow-up with Dr. Evangelista the Tuesday after your surgery unless otherwise instructed

Showering:

- Okay to remove dressing and shower 72 hours after surgery
- Do not apply lotions, creams or ointments to your incision
- Do not immerse your incision in water such as a pool, hottub or bath until cleared by physician (usually 6 weeks after surgery)

Exercises:

- Focus on closed kinetic chain (mini-squats, leg press, calf press, and step-ups) exercises
- Patient to do home exercise program 2-3 times per day with ice and elevation for 15-20 minutes after home exercise program

Weeks 0-1:

Crutches and Brace:

- WBAT with brace, full Range Of Motion (ROM), crutches are usually required for 1-2 weeks after surgery

Exercises:

- Ankle pumps, patellar mobilizations, prone knee hang to increase extension, prone knee flexion, heel slides (no active knee extension), quad sets, straight leg raise, calf stretch using towel or sheet

Priority:

- Decrease swelling, gain full extension, and increase flexion



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Weeks 2-3:

Exercises:

- Continue with initial exercises and progress as tolerated
- Begin bicycle without resistance for ROM, prone knee flexion, leg press, heel raises etc.

Priority:

- Decrease swelling, increase knee flexion, no ROM restrictions (progress as tolerated)

Weeks 3-6:

Exercises:

- May progressively add weight to exercises focusing on closed kinetic chain activities (for example: leg press, calf press, partial squats, step-ups) and balance/proprioception activities
- NO active open-chain knee extension at any time during rehab process)
- Add elliptical machine, stairmaster™, and rowing machine as tolerated

Bike:

- When patient is able to perform a full revolution on stationary bicycle begin to gradually add resistance
- When patient is comfortable with indoor bicycling, transition to outdoor bicycling with high cadence/low resistance
- Note: The patient should not use clip less pedals as this requires the patient to twist the knee to release the bike shoe from the pedal. Instead, the patient should use flat pedals or cages

Recreational Activities:

- Golfing at 6 weeks ok, starting with chipping and putting

Priority:

- Full AROM expected by post op week 3-4

Weeks 6-12:

Exercises:

- Continue/progress previous exercises; add resisted gait, progress balance/proprioception training, progress strengthening exercises as tolerated, but no open chain knee extension

Recreational Activities:

- Swimming at 12 weeks
- NO whip kick (beat stroke or egg beater)
- Straight ahead jogging at 12 weeks



Weeks 12-20:

Exercises:

- Progress as tolerated

Brace:

- Some patients may benefit from an ACL type brace at this point during therapy
- Dr. Evangelista will discuss this at the 3 and 6 month visits

Weeks 20-24:

Exercises:

- Progress as tolerated and focus on power, strength, and endurance
- NO starting, stopping, cutting, twisting, jumping until 6 months post-operative

Weeks 20-36:

Return to Sport:

- This does not mean return to competition
- This means it's time to begin sport specific training
- Every sport is different. Dr. Evangelista will discuss the specifics at the 6 month post-op visit
- The goal is to progress over the next 6 months in order to be ready for competition at one year from surgery
- Most patients note that it takes about 18 months until maximum improvement is realized

Brace:

- Some patients benefit from an ACL type brace as they return to their sport
- Dr. Evangelista will discuss at the 3 and 6 month visit

Appointments:

- 1.) 2 weeks from surgery for suture removal and wound check
Please make an earlier appointment if you are concerned about your incision or possible complications
- 2.) 6 weeks from surgery, discontinue hinged post-operative knee brace at this visit
- 3.) 12 weeks from surgery for check up
- 4.) 6 months from surgery to clear for return to sport specific activities

If you have any questions about these guidelines, your procedure or the rehabilitation process please do not hesitate to call us at 480-656-0291