

# ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY & SPORTS MEDICINE

Steven Porter, M.D., PC

4566 EAST INVERNESS AVENUE, #108

Mesa, AZ 85206

Phone: 480-659-4811

Fax: 480-659-4629

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## ACL RECONSTRUCTION POST-OPERATIVE REHABILITATION GUIDELINES

**SHOWERING:** 4 days minimum of no showering. Patient should wait for post-op wound check, which is usually done by 3-5 days after surgery.

### 0-1WEEK

**CRUTCHES:** weight bear as tolerated with brace. Full **ROM**.

**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.

**PRIORITY:** decrease swelling, gain full extension, increase flexion.

### 1-3 WEEKS

**CRUTCHES/BRACE:** usually D/C'd at appointment 1-1/2 weeks post-op.

**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.)

### 3-6 WEEKS

**EXERCISES:** may progressively add weight to exercises focusing on closed kinetic chain activities (ie: leg press, partial squats, step-ups) and balance/proprioception activities (NO active open chain knee extension at any time in 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. Patient should NOT use clipless pedals as this requires the patient to twist the knee to release the bike shoe from the pedal. Instead, use flat pedals or cages.

**RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES:** may begin golfing at 6 weeks.

**PRIORITY:** full **AROM** expected by 3-6 weeks.

### 6-12 WEEKS

**EXERCISES:** Continue/progress previous exercises, add resisted gait, progress balance/proprioception training, progress strengthening exercises as tolerated. No open chain knee extension.

**RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES:** swimming at 12 weeks – no whip kick (breast stroke or egg beater). Running at 12 weeks.

### 12-20 WEEKS

**EXERCISES:** progress as tolerated.

### 20-36 WEEKS

**EXERCISES:** focus on power, strength, endurance and agility (no cutting, twisting, jumping until 6 months post-op).

**RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES:** return to sports at 6 months (brace optional).