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Rehabilitation Protocol: Meniscus Radial/Root Repair

*This protocol is for meniscus repairs of meniscus tears that are either complete thickness radial tears or meniscus root repairs.

Phase I: 0-6 weeks after surgery

Weight Bearing: Non-Weight Bearing with crutches

Brace: Hinged Knee Brace

- Locked in full extension for ambulation and sleeping (Weeks 0-2)
 - May unlock for range of motion exercises
- May remove brace when sleeping after week 2

Range of Motion:

- Flexion
 - AAROM/AROM as tolerated
 - Goal is 90° by week 3
 - No range of motion past 90° until 6 weeks
- Extension
 - Obtain full extension within first week
 - Passive knee extension to 0° in brace

Therapeutic Exercises

- Patella mobilizations
- Quad/Hamstring sets
- Heel slides
- Non-weight bearing stretch of the Gastroc/Soleus
- Straight-Leg Raise with brace in full extension until quad strength prevents extension lag
- Prone hangs (starting week 2 if still not at full extension)
- Exercise bike and closed kinetic chain exercises at 2 weeks

Phase II: 6-12 weeks after surgery

Weight Bearing: Progress to weight-bearing as tolerated

Brace: May unlock brace for ambulation. Discontinue brace use when patient has achieved full extension with no evidence of extension lag

Range of Motion:

- Progressive flexion as tolerated to full
- No flexion past 90° with load bearing exercises (i.e. no deep squats/lunges)
- Maintain full extension
- Avoid forced hyperflexion until 3 months post op

Therapeutic Exercises

- Closed chain extension exercises
- Toe raises
- Balance exercises
- Progress to weight bearing stretch of the Gastroc/Soleus

Phase III: 12-16 weeks after surgery

Weight Bearing: Full

Range of Motion: Full/painless

Therapeutic Exercises

- Advance closed chain strengthening exercises, proprioception activities
- Core/hip strengthening exercises
- Begin use of stairmaster/elliptical
- No impact training x 4 months

Phase IV: 4-6 months after surgery

Therapeutic Exercises

- Increase strength/coordination/proprioception/endurance
- Agility drills
- Sport specific drills

Phase V: 6+ months after surgery

Criteria for return to sports:

1. Full and painless active ROM
2. No patellofemoral joint pain
3. Gross manual muscle testing strength 90-100% of contralateral side
4. Patient can pass single leg hop for distance, single leg squat test, and figure of eight hop test
5. Quadriceps/thigh circumference should be within 1 cm of non-operative side (if normal)

Weekly strengthening program – independently (2–3 times per week):

- Full speed jog/run: 20–30 minutes
- Exercise stationary bike: increasing resistance, set bike so low leg is flexed no more than 10–15 degrees – 20 minutes
- Agility drills (figure 8's, shuttle runs, turns, teeter-totter balancing)
- Continue quad sets, SLR's (300 repetitions per day)
- Hills/Stairs – running up hills and up stairs can be utilized to help build muscle mass and strength
- Care should be taken running downhill and down steps. This can irritate the knee and should be one of the last exercises added to the workout program.