

KNEE

Patellar or Quadriceps Tendon Repair

Surgery Date: _____

Progressions are time and criterion-based, dependent on soft tissue healing, patient demographics and clinician evaluation. A review of the operative note and communication of any concerns with the referring physician is encouraged. Use of allowed visits should consider overall insurance limitations. When limitations are present, spread visits out over time to ensure that the patient can optimally complete rehab program with return to appropriate activities.

Phase I (Weeks 0 – 8): Immediate Postoperative / Period of Protection

Brace

- Locked in full extension for ambulation and sleeping
- Unlock for supervised ROM exercises only

Weight Bearing

- Weight bearing as tolerated in locked brace with crutches

Range of Motion

- Weeks 0–2: PROM 0–30°
- Weeks 2–4: PROM 0–60°. AAROM 0–60° with knee flexion only. No active extension
- Weeks 4–6: PROM 0–90°. AAROM 0–90° with knee flexion only. No active extension
- Weeks 6–8: Begin AROM 0–90° with knee flexion only

Modalities

- Per therapist discretion

Rehabilitation Goals

- Protect healing tendon repair
- Reduce pain and swelling
- Gradually restore ROM within restrictions
- Restore quad activation (isometric only initially)

Therapeutic Exercise

- Quad sets (light isometric, weeks 0–4)
- Straight-leg raises may be performed with the brace locked in full extension.
- Hip strengthening (SLR abduction/adduction, clam shells)
- Ankle pumps, core stabilization

Precautions

- Open-chain active knee extension against gravity is not permitted for 8 weeks.
- No running, jumping, plyometric activity

Phase II (Weeks 8 – 16): Transitional Phase – Low Impact

Brace

- Discontinue brace when adequate quad control demonstrated

Weight Bearing

- Full weight bearing, wean crutches

Range of Motion

- Progress to full, symmetrical ROM

Rehabilitation Goals

- Full ROM
- Normalize gait pattern
- Return to light work / moderately heavy labor
- Return to recreational sports (swimming, cycling, walking) x 2 days a week

Therapeutic Exercise

- Begin active knee extension exercises
- Progress quad and hip strengthening
- Begin closed chain exercises
- Balance and proprioception training
- Stationary bike

Phase III (Weeks 16 – 24): Intermediate Phase – Linear

Rehabilitation Goals

- Initiate running program (when criteria met)
- Progress strengthening

Therapeutic Exercise

- Progress resistance training
- Lateral step-down progression
- Begin linear jogging program (when cleared)

Phase IV (Weeks 24+): Return to Activity – High Impact

Rehabilitation Goals

- Return to sport-specific activities
- Return to full sport participation (6+ months)

Criteria for Return to Sport

- Full, pain-free ROM
- No effusion
- Isokinetic strength $\geq$ 90% of contralateral limb
- Physician clearance