



ACL Reconstruction Surgery Post-Operative Rehabilitation

Stage 1; Week 0-2

- GOAL; Control swelling and fluid build up in your knee.
- Apply ice, 10 minutes every hour. Wrap a bag of ice in a towel and apply to your knee.
- Compressive dressing. 3 days after your surgery you may remove the soft crepe and wool bandage but leave the sticky adhesive dressing on.
- Wear the tight sock like sleeve bandage (tubigrip)
- Weight bear as tolerated with crutches. Your physiotherapist will help your progression from 2 to 1 crutch. You must have full knee extension and walk without a limp before walking without crutches.
- If you have a splint keep it on for 2 weeks
- Static quad exercises. Push down on a rolled towel under your knee by tightening the quads (front thigh muscles). Hold this and count to 10 and then relax to count of 10 and repeat this 10 times every 3 hours.

Stage 2; Week 3-6

- You should see your physiotherapist at this stage to progress with a guided rehabilitation program
- The aim is to improve quads strength, range of movement and muscle control
- Start calf and hamstring stretches while sitting down with a towel
- Progress closed chain exercises (quarter squats and single leg lunge) as pain allows.
- Introduce gym-based exercise equipment including leg press and stationary cycle.
- Begin proprioceptive exercises including single standing leg balance on the ground and mini tramp. This can progress by introducing body movement whilst standing on one leg.
- Bilateral and single calf raises and stretching
- Avoid isolated loading off the hamstrings due to ease of tear. Hamstrings will be progressively loaded through closed chain and gym based activity.

Stage 3; Week 7-12

- This is when your ACL graft is at its weakest
- Open chain exercises should be avoided
- Continue closed chain exercises

Start core strengthening

- Your physiotherapist will guide you through the specific exercise programs

Stage 4; Months 3-6

- Start of sport specific training; cardio, proprioception, strengthening

Stage 5; Months 6-9

- Start training with team, introduce ball training etc

Stage 6; Months 9-12

- Return to competitive sport

Driving; *You should not drive until you have full control of your leg and not using any splints or crutches. This may take up to 6 weeks*