

ACL Injury: Non-Operative “Pre-hab”

An increase in pain, swelling, or loss of ROM suggests that progression of the program may be too fast.

PHASE I (WEEK 1) ACUTE INJURY PHASE

GOALS:

- Reduce pain, inflammation, and effusion
- Restore full passive knee extension
- Restore patella mobility
- Gradually improve knee flexion
- Re-establish quadriceps control
- Restore independent ambulation

PRECAUTIONS:

- Two crutches: WBAT
- Brace/Immobilizer locked in full extension for ambulation
- Avoid active knee extension

TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

- RICE
- Range of Motion: Passive knee extension. Active knee flexion. Goal 0-100° by 1 week.
- Strengthening: Emphasize quad isometrics and closed chain exercises. Hamstring curls.
- Patella mobilization
- Bicycle beginning week 2
- Modalities: PRN
- HEP

MINIMUM CRITERIA FOR ADVANCEMENT:

- Quad control (able to perform good quad set and SLR)
- Full passive knee extension
- PROM 0-90°
- Good patella mobility
- Minimal joint effusion
- Independent ambulation

PHASE II (WEEKS 2-4) INTERMEDIATE PHAS

GOALS:

- Maintain full passive knee extension
- Gradually increase knee flexion
- Eliminate effusion
- Restore proprioception
- Restore patella mobility

PRECAUTIONS:

- Discontinue knee immobilizer at 2-3 weeks post injury
- WBAT with goal to discontinue crutches by 2 weeks post injury

TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Maintain full passive extension. Progress flexion as tolerated.
- Gait training and proprioception
- Patella mobilization
- Flexibility work
- Modalities: PRN
- HEP