

Hamstring Tendon Autograft ACL Reconstruction Rehabilitation Protocol

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Phase 1 - 0-4 weeks

Weightbearing

Touch-down weightbearing with crutches with strong emphasis on foot flat and full knee extension during stance phase

Brace

Locked in full extension for ambulation and sleeping

May remove brace while sleeping after first postoperative visit 7-10 days after surgery

ROM

As tolerated

Exercises

Heel slides, quad/hamstring sets, patellar mobs, gastroc/soleus stretch, foot flat gait training, NMES to improve quad contraction

SLR w/ brace in full extension until quad strength prevents extension lag

Phase II - 4-12 weeks

Weightbearing

Full with progression to normal gait pattern

Brace

Discontinue at four weeks if patient has no extension lag

ROM

Maintain full extension and progressive flexion

Exercises

Toe raises, closed chain quads, balance exercises, hamstring curls, stationary bike, step-ups, front and side planks, hip/glute/core, pool

MD recheck at 7-10 days, 6 weeks, 4 months
Avoid NSAIDs until 4 weeks after surgery

Phase III - 12-20 weeks**Weightbearing**

Full without use of crutches and with a normalized gait pattern

Brace

None

ROM

Gain full and pain-free

Exercises

Advanced closed chain strengthening, progress proprioception activities, StairMaster, elliptical and running straight ahead

Phase IV - 20-28 weeks**Weightbearing**

Full

Brace

None

ROM

Full and pain-free

Exercises

20 weeks: Begin jumping

24 weeks: Advance running to sprinting, backward running, cutting/pivoting/changing direction, initiate plyometric program and sport-specific drills

26 weeks: Advance as tolerated

RSE completed at 26 weeks

Completion of RSE (Return to Sport Evaluation) not mandatory, but recommended at approximately 26 weeks post-op for competitive athletes returning to play after rehab

Phase V - 7+ months**Weightbearing**

Full

Brace

None

ROM

Full and pain-free

Exercises

Gradual return to sports participation after completion of RSE Maintenance program based on RSE Maintenance program based on RSE