

Meniscus Repair (Radial Tear)

Phase 1 – Maximum Protection

Weeks 0 to 6

- Brace – 0-90 degrees for unloaded range of motion only
 - Recommend locking in extension during sleep
- No weight bearing, use two crutches at all times for 6 weeks
- Limit knee flexion to 90 degrees for 3 weeks
- Allow 90-120 degrees between 3 to 6 weeks

Goals:

- Reduce pain and inflammation
- Full knee extension

Exercise Progression:

- Emphasize patellofemoral mobilizations
- Passive/active knee range of motion with 90 degrees flexion limit
- Quadriceps setting emphasize VMO function
- Multi-plane straight leg raising
- Open chain hip strengthening
- Gait training

Phase 2 – Progressive Stretching and Early Strengthening

Weeks 6 to 8

- Brace – open to 0-90 degrees for ambulation, do not have to sleep in brace
- Continue using two crutches, with gradual progression of weight bearing
 - Increase to full weight bearing over the next 2 weeks

Goals:

- Full knee extension
- Gradual progression to full knee flexion
- No swelling
- Normal gait

Exercise Progression:

- Gradual progression to full knee flexion
- Continue to emphasize patella mobility
- Begin bilateral closed kinetic chain strengthening (limited range initially)
- Step-up progression

- Begin stationary bike with light resistance initially
- Gait training – normalize gait pattern

Phase 3 – Advanced Strengthening and Endurance Training

Weeks 8 to 12

- Discontinue brace

Goals:

- Full knee flexion and extension

Exercise Progression:

- Avoid rotational movements for 14 weeks
- Advance stationary bike program (increase intensity)
- Introduce treadmill walking and elliptical trainer
- Begin unilateral closed kinetic chain program
- Gym strengthening progression (leg press above 90 degrees, hamstring curls, etc.)

Phase 4 – Advanced Strengthening and Plyometric Drills

Weeks 12 to 20

- Follow-up examination with the physician

Goals:

- Pass return to sport function test at >90% (involved vs uninvolved limb) by 16 weeks

Exercise Progression:

- Plyometric drills from bilateral to unilateral at 12 weeks
- Linear running progression at 12 weeks
- Progress to lateral and rotational stresses at 14 weeks
- Multi-directional drills at 14 to 16 weeks

Criteria for return to play:

- Follow-up examination with the physician
- Pass return to sport function test at >90% (involved vs uninvolved limb)
- Display symmetry and confidence in high-speed cutting, multi-plane plyometric drills, sprinting, and decelerating

Anticipated return to sport:

- 4-5 months for contact and non-contact athletes



PLANO ORTHOPEDIC
& SPORTS MEDICINE CENTER

Jonathan D. Ringenberg, M.D.

Orthopedic Sports Medicine

Postoperative Protocol