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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR PATIENTS FOR ARTHROSCOPIC ACL RECONSTRUCTION

PRIOR TO HOSPITAL DISCHARGE

Aim -

Comfortable range of motion, minimise swelling, effective co-contractions and safe use of crutches.

Physiotherapy –

- Range of motion exercises
- Co-contractions of 0-30°
- Encourage full passive extension
- Mobilise day 1 partial weight bearing on crutches after removal of IV cannula
- Ankle and hip range of motion exercises active and passive

Discharge from hospital the day following surgery

Keep dressings dry until reviewed around day 10. Call rooms if any concerns.

Discharge to day 14

Aim is range of motion 0-90°, partial weight bearing, effective co-contraction and reduce swelling to minimal.

Own range of motion exercises, ice packs 4 times a day, review in rooms at day 14. Co-contractions 0-30° for 5 seconds, 10 repetitions three times a day. Crutches progressively increased weight bearing for 2 weeks.

Week 2 to week 6

Aim is full range of motion, full weight bearing with normal gait, improved quadriceps and hamstrings muscle tone and early proprioceptive exercises.

- Closed chain quads and hamstrings (wall squats) moving towards open chain hamstrings (prone range of motion exercises)
- Patellar mobilisation
- Ice packs to aid resolution of all swelling
- Co-contractions 0-30°
- Discard crutches as soon as confident and not limping
- Concentrate on normalising gait

- Hip and ankle range of motion and strengthening exercises

Week 6 to week 12

Aim is increased strength in the quadriceps and hamstrings and improved proprioception.

- Continue co-contractions as warm ups
- Closed chain quads, open and closed chain hamstrings, walking to jogging, jogging on flat grass initially, moving to gentle figure 8's (usually 8 weeks onwards), wall squats, single leg squats, exercise bike – keep seat high to avoid patellofemoral pain.

Week 9 to week 10

- Commence gym equipment: rowing machine and stepmaster, step ups, step downs, leg press and hamstring curls and short squats.
- Running in water (hydrotherapy).

Week 12 to week 20

Aim is gym work for endurance and strength, improved proprioception for sports

- Gradually increase speed of contraction in quads and hamstrings in loaded exercises, leg press, hamstring curls, half squats and wall squats.
- Continue closed chain quads, open and closed chain hamstrings, single leg squats with hand weights up to 10kg (depending upon patient build), stepmaster, exercise bike and rowing machine, running with tight curves and figure 8's, start gentle sporting manoeuvres (sidestepping, forehand to backhand turning, running forward and backward)

Week 10 to week 26

Aim: return to sport

- Sport specific training sessions, then limited participation then full participation
- Open chain quads and hamstrings, plyometrics

Reinjury rate lowest if return to cutting sports (soccer, basketball, hockey, rugby etc) delayed until 12 months post surgery.