

# ACL Reconstruction

## Bone–Patellar Tendon–Bone Allograft

### Physical Therapy Protocol

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#### Restrictions Summary

- **Brace:**
    - Hinged knee brace locked in extension until patient can perform straight leg raise (SLR) without quadriceps lag.
    - Then gradually unlocked per therapist and surgeon discretion.
  - **Weight Bearing:**
    - **Weightbearing as tolerated (WBAT)** immediately with crutches.
    - Discontinue crutches once patient walks without a limp.
  - **Range of Motion (ROM):**
    - **Full passive motion encouraged early.**
    - Emphasis on regaining full extension and gradual progression of flexion.
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#### Phase I: Protective Phase (Weeks 0–2)

##### Goals:

- Protect surgical graft.
- Reduce swelling and pain.
- Achieve full extension.
- Begin gentle ROM and early quad activation.
- Normalize gait with crutches and brace.

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**Brace & WB:**

- Hinged knee brace locked in extension.
- WBAT with crutches.

**Exercises:**

- Patella and tendon mobilizations
- Ankle pumps
- Quad sets
- Hamstring sets
- Heel slides (flexion/extension – wall and seated)
- Gentle sit-and-reach for hamstrings

**Cardio:**

- Bike/rowing with **well leg only**
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**Phase II: Early Motion and Strengthening (Weeks 2–6)**

**Goals:**

- Normalize gait pattern
- Restore full ROM
- Initiate light strengthening
- Improve neuromuscular control and balance

**Brace & WB:**

- Unlock brace once SLR is achieved without lag
- Discontinue crutches once ambulating without limp

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**Exercises:**

- Continue ROM (wall slides, seated flexion, extension mobilization)
  - Toe and heel raises
  - Balance training series
  - Stationary bike (both legs – begin without resistance, then gradually add resistance)
  - Begin aquajogging, treadmill walking (7% incline)
  - Light hamstring and quad strengthening
  - Double-leg bridges
  - Static reverse lunge holds
  - Begin cord resistance exercises
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**Phase III: Progressive Strengthening & Proprioception (Weeks 6–12)**

**Goals:**

- Normalize strength and balance
- Full pain-free ROM
- Initiate dynamic stability drills
- Progress strengthening and endurance

**Exercises:**

- Balance squats
  - Leg press
  - Single leg deadlifts
  - Elliptical, rowing machine, stair stepper
  - Swimming with fins
  - Continue progression of bike resistance
  - Single plane jogging progression by week 10–12
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## **Phase IV: Return to Sport Training (Weeks 12–24)**

### **Goals:**

- Achieve full strength and neuromuscular control
- Begin sport-specific drills
- Normalize biomechanics

### **Exercises:**

- Advance agility drills: multidirectional movement, cone drills
  - Functional sports test exercises
  - Golf, outdoor biking, hiking, snowshoeing
  - Return to running and sports: basketball, football, tennis, soccer, etc. per MD clearance
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### **Clearance Criteria for Return to Sport:**

- Symmetrical strength and range of motion
- Normal functional movement patterns
- Pass functional sports test (per therapist)
- Surgeon clearance required for high-impact sports

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