

POST-OPERATIVE REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

Patellar Tendinopathy Excision

William McLaughlin, MD | Sports Medicine Surgery | Advanced Bone & Joint

Phase 1 | 0-2 Weeks

GOALS FOR THIS PHASE

- Protect the tendon excision with brace locked in extension.
- TDWB with crutches; brace in extension for sleeping.
- Achieve and maintain full extension; progress flexion ROM 0-90°.
- Initiate quadriceps activation and patellar mobility.

Weight Bearing & Bracing

- TDWB in brace in extension with crutches.
- Brace in extension for sleeping during weeks 0-2.

Range of Motion

- Active/passive ROM 0-90°.

Therapeutic Exercises

- Quad sets.
- SLR (must wear brace locked in full extension).
- Heel slides.
- Patellar mobilization.

Phase 2 | 2-6 Weeks

GOALS FOR THIS PHASE

- Remain TTWB; unlock brace as tolerated.
- Progress ROM to full.
- Avoid weight bearing past 90° flexion.
- Continue SLR with brace locked in full extension.

Weight Bearing & Bracing

- Remain TTWB.
- May unlock brace.

Range of Motion

- Progress with ROM until full.

Precautions

- No weight bearing with knee flexion past 90°.

Therapeutic Exercises

- SLR with brace locked in full extension.

Phase 3 | 6-8 Weeks

GOALS FOR THIS PHASE

- Discontinue brace and advance to FWB then WBAT once quadriceps strength is adequate.
- Discontinue crutches when gait is normalized.
- Begin functional closed-chain work.

Weight Bearing & Bracing

- May discontinue brace; advance to FFWB, then WBAT when appropriate quadriceps strength is achieved.
- Discontinue crutches when gait is normalized.

Therapeutic Exercises

- Wall sits to 90°.

Phase 4 | 8-16 Weeks

GOALS FOR THIS PHASE

- WBAT without brace or crutches.
- Full ROM.
- Progress closed-chain exercises.
- Avoid squats and lunges until 4 months post-op.

Weight Bearing

- WBAT without brace or crutches (if applicable).

Range of Motion

- Full ROM.

Therapeutic Exercises

- Progress with closed-chain exercises.

Precautions

- No squats or lunges until 4 months following surgery.

Phase 5 | 16+ Weeks

GOALS FOR THIS PHASE

- Progress strengthening including single-leg work.
- Begin jogging and progress to running.
- Initiate sport-specific exercise.

Therapeutic Exercises

- Progress strengthening exercises.
- Single-leg strengthening.
- Begin jogging and progress to running.
- Sport-specific exercise.

This protocol is a general guideline. Progression is patient-specific and at the discretion of William McLaughlin, MD.