

Arthroscopic Meniscus Repair - Bucket Handle Tear Physical Therapy Protocol

David P. Trofa, M.D.

Assistant Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery, Columbia University Medical Center

Chief of Sports Medicine, New York-Presbyterian Westchester

Director of Clinical Outcomes, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery

Head Team Physician, Columbia University

www.DavidTrofaMD.com

Patient Name: _____

Date of Surgery: _____

Procedure: Right / Left Knee, Medial / Lateral Bucket Handle Meniscus Repair

General precautions:

- NWB for 4 weeks with transition to WBAT between 4-6 weeks.
- ROM is limited to 90° for 4 weeks, full ROM obtained by 6 weeks.
- Brace use for 6 weeks.
- Tibial rotation is avoided for 6wks.

Frequency: 2x per week for _____ weeks

Phase I (0-4 weeks): *Period of protection.*

- **Weightbearing:** Non-Weight Bearing (NWB) with crutches, brace locked in extension.
- **Brace:** Locked in extension (removed for hygiene and ROM exercises at PT).
- **ROM:** PROM and AROM 0-90°.
- **Therapeutic exercises:**
 - Patellar mobilizations: 5-10 minutes daily
 - Electric stimulation for quad control
 - Heel slides
 - SLRs supine
 - Isometrics for quads, hip abductors and adductors
 - Passive leg hangs to 90°
 - Ankle/hip strengthening

Phase II (4-6 weeks): *Transition phase.*

- **Weight Bearing:** Progress to WBAT between weeks 4-6. Brace locked in extension during ambulation. Unlocked at rest.
- **Brace:** Unlocked fully for ROM exercises.
- **ROM:** Full ROM allowed.
- **Therapeutic Exercises:**
 - As above.

- Progress weight for SLRs
- Week 4: Partial wall sits at flexion angles <math><90^\circ</math>.

Phase III (6-12 weeks): *Strengthening phase.*

- **Rehabilitation Goal:** Advance closed chain strengthening to provide extra-articular protection of meniscus during sports activities.
- **Weight Bearing:** As tolerated. Transition off crutches by 6 weeks.
- **Brace:** Discontinue hinged knee brace use when patient has achieved full extension with no evidence of extension lag.
- **ROM:** Full active ROM
- **Therapeutic Exercises:**
 - As above with progressive resistance
 - Closed chain extension exercises, hamstring strengthening
 - Isokinetics
 - Proprioception exercises
 - Stationary bike
- **Restrictions:** No running.

Phase IV (12-16 weeks): *Sport-specific activities.*

- **Weight Bearing:** Full weightbearing with normal gait pattern
- **ROM:** Full/painless
- **Therapeutic Exercises:**
 - As above.
 - Focus on single-leg strengthening
 - Begin jogging/running
 - Begin with 1 mile jog and increase in ¼ mile increments
 - Once able to jog 20 minutes without discomfort or swelling, may progress to functional activities to include figure 8's, cutting and jumping.
 - Plyometrics and sport specific activities (progressed as tolerated)

Phase V (4-6 months): *Return to athletics*

- **Weight Bearing:** Full.
- **ROM:** Full/painless
- **Therapeutic Exercises:**
 - As above.
 - Gradual return to athletic activity as tolerated
 - Maintenance program for strength and endurance
- **Criteria to return to sports:**
 - Full pain free ROM
 - Normal isokinetic evaluation and function tests
 - Satisfactory performance of sport specific activities without pain or effusion