



Mid-America Orthopedics

Dr. John Babb

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PATELLAR TENDON REPAIR

Always refer to the operative note for specific post-operative precautions indicated by the surgical team

Day 1-6 Post-op (2-4 Visits/week): PHASE I (IMMEDIATE POST-OP)

- PT removes bandages on POD #3, keep tegaderm/aquacel intact until Dr Babb can remove them.
- No ointments, betadine etc should be used on the incisions.
- If any drainage/oozing is present recover with 4x4's, and notify Dr Babb (may need antibiotics).
- **NO ice bags** on any oozing or open wounds without being covered first with a bandage.
- If any wounds are oozing delay range of motion until wounds are closed and healed.
- NO water on wounds for 2 weeks (including showers) even if covered, no submersion of wounds in water (baths) until wounds are scars.
- **Brace: Locked in full extension – worn at all times (ambulating, sleeping, standing, etc).**
- **Ambulation:**
 - o WBAT with brace locked in full extension (***This may be changed to NWB - will note on PT script***)
- **PROM: 0° - No ROM 2 weeks post-op**
 - o No active knee extension
 - o No passive knee flexion
- **Intervention:**
 - o Swelling Management:
 - Ice, compression, elevation
 - Retrograde massage
 - Ankle pumps
 - o Strengthening:
 - Calf raises
 - Quad sets
 - Glute set

Week 2: Phase II (INTERMEDIATE POST-OP)

- **Brace:** Locked in extension at all times. Brace worn at night unless otherwise specified by surgeon.
- **Ambulation:** WBAT with leg locked in extension
- **ROM: Start at 50°, 60° maximum end of week 2**
 - o Light overpressure only for PROM.
- **Exercise: Do in brace with it locked**
 - o Quad sets
 - o SLR
- **Criteria to Progress**
 - o 2 weeks post-op
 - o Knee extension to 0°

Weeks 3-6: Phase II (INTERMEDIATE POST-OP)

- **Brace:** Continue locked in extension when up/ambulating – can unlock for ROM or when resting (can unlock for sitting/laying - brace ankle can be unlocked to available PROM, but not to exceed PROM progression noted below)
- **Ambulation:** WBAT with leg locked in extension – should be FWB by 6 weeks.
- **ROM: Progress 10°/week until 90° achieved**
 - 70° maximum end of week 3
 - 80° maximum end of week 4
 - 90° maximum end of week 5
- **Exercise:**
 - SLR without lag
 - Side lying hip abduction and adduction, prone leg extension
 - Standing hip abduction, adduction and extension
 - Glute bridge with legs straight elevated on a chair
 - Calf raise
- **Criteria to progress**
 - Full passive knee extension PROM
 - Passive knee flexion to 90°
 - FWB in brace with no pain
 - Active knee extension to 0° with quad set

Weeks 6-15: Phase III (LATE POST-OP)

- **Brace:** Unlock brace. Continue brace for 8 weeks and until strength is 80%.
- **Ambulation:** WBAT with brace unlocked
- **ROM:** 90°, progress to full. A/PROM should be cautioned not to progress faster than 10° per week before 12 weeks post-op.
 - Patellofemoral joint mobilization
 - Flexion PROM with overpressure
 - Heel slide.
 - Sitting knee flexion
- **Exercise:** Continue previous exercises. Progress strength, gradually as appropriate avoiding anterior knee pain.
 - Avoid aggressive quad stretching
 - No maximal voluntary contraction of the quadriceps until week 16 (no manual muscle test or handheld dynamometer testing).
 - Progress strengthening – leg press, hamstring curls, squats, lunges, single-leg activities
 - Begin balance/proprioceptive work
 - 12 weeks post-op start walking program
- **Criteria to Progress**
 - Quad strength $\geq 70\%$ of contralateral
 - Knee flexion PROM $\geq 120^\circ$
 - Single-leg stance $\geq 30s$ without compensation

Months 4-6: PHASE IV (TRANSITIONAL)

- Goals
 - Restore full ROM and quad strength
 - Begin return to jogging/running
- Precautions
 - Avoid pain > DOMS in anterior knee
- Interventions
 - Sport-specific drills, plyometrics, agility
 - 5-7 months post-op running and low level plyometrics
- Criteria to Progress
 - Quad index $\geq 90\%$
 - Symmetry in gait and strength

Months 6-8: PHASE V (RETURN TO SPORT)

- Goals
 - Full return to sport/competition
- Interventions
 - Sport-specific progression, multidirectional drills, advanced plyometrics
 - 7-9 months possible return to sport if passes sport testing
- Criteria to Progress
 - Quad index $\geq 90\%$
 - Pass return-to-sport functional testing

Patient progression during the time frames along with general modality and exercise choice is left up to the discretion of the treating therapist. If you have any questions regarding this protocol, please contact (316) 630-9300.

