

Post-operative Quadriceps or Patellar Tendon Repair Protocol

First 7-10 days

Keep brace on and locked in full extension.

Use crutches for partial weight bearing only.

Change dressing on second day after surgery and replace with dry dressing.

Perform calf pumps three times each day (10-20 repetitions each time).

Use ice pack/cryocuff 3 times each day for 15 minutes each time.

Keep wound/dressings dry. No showers for seven days and no baths for 3 weeks or until wounds are healed fully. You may use saran wrap or other plastic bag (garbage bag) to keep wound dry if you want to shower sooner.

Pain medication and an antibiotic will be prescribed.

Avoid anti-inflammatories for the first six weeks after surgery.

First week to six weeks

At first clinic visit:

- Brace for eight weeks.
- Full weight bearing with brace locked in full extension
- Sutures/staples will be removed and may start showering. No baths or pools for 3 weeks after surgery.
- Do not need to wear dressing if brace does not rub against wound.
- Steri-strips will fall off on their own. If not, pull them off gradually one week after they are placed.

PT goals (Passive range of motion):

- 90 degrees of flexion 4-6 weeks.
- Swelling control

Exercises:

- Start heel slides at 4 weeks
- Start straight leg raises at 6 weeks
- Patellar mobilization
- Active flexion/passive extension exercises at 4 weeks

6 weeks to 12 weeks

PT goals (Improve ROM, initiate strengthening):

- Obtain full knee flexion by 10 weeks
- Closed chain quadriceps strengthening only with body weight or less
- Open chain hamstring and calf strengthening

Exercises:

- Wall slides and mini-squats to 45 degrees (closed chain 0-45)
- Hamstring curls with low weights 0-90. Progress gradually to higher weights by 12 weeks
- Toes raises, step ups
- May ride exercise bike
- Pool walking

3 to 6 months

PT goals:

Continue all previous exercises to progress to full strength of quadriceps and hamstrings

Exercises:

- Elliptical trainer at 3-4 months
- Start jogging at 4-6 months
- Full squats, leg presses at low weights and progress to full weight by 5-6 months. All weight training should be slow, controlled. No ballistic motion
- No cutting maneuvers

6 – 9 months

Goals:

- Return to sport if full range of motion, strength is 90% of other leg
- Brace not required

Exercises:

Begin with sport-specific exercises and cutting maneuvers and progress to playing over 1-6 weeks

Additional instructions:

If the right leg is the operative leg, you may not drive an automatic transmission vehicle for 6 weeks.

If the left leg is the operative leg, you may drive an automatic transmission vehicle after having stopped using narcotic pain medication.

May return to sedentary desk work in one week.

May return to work requiring standing gradually over 3-4 weeks.

May return to heavy labor in 6-8 months.

Duration and frequency of PT:

For week 1-8 (14 visits): supervised 2x/week. Perform exercises on your own 5-7 days/week

For week 8-12 (4 visits): supervised 1x/week. Perform exercises on your own 3-5 days/week

For weeks 12-24 (3 visits): supervised 1x/month. Perform exercises on your own 3-5 days/week