

**Dr. Franky Davis**  
**Sterling Center Orthopedics and Sports Medicine**  
**ACL Reconstruction**  
**Post Operative Protocol**

**Phase I – Maximum Protection (Weeks 0 to 2):**

**0 to 1 Week:**

- Brace – six weeks
- Use crutches weight 50% bearing x 2 weeks

Goals

- Reduce inflammation
- Normalize patella mobility with manual mobilizations
- full extension
- 90° - 100° of knee flexion, progressing to full as tolerated.

Exercise progression

- Quadriceps setting using NMES as needed
- Multi-plane straight leg raising
- Gait training

**Weeks 1 to 2:**

Goals

- Reduce inflammation
- Full knee extension/hyperextension
- 100° – 120° of knee flexion, progress as tolerated

**Phase II – Progressive Stretching and Early Strengthening (Weeks 2 to 6):**

**Weeks 2 to 4:**

Goals

- Progress off crutches
- Full knee extension/hyperextension
- Knee flexion to 120°, progress as tolerated
- Normalize gait mechanics

Exercise progression

- Bilateral squat progression
- Multi-plane open and closed kinetic chain hip strengthening
- Step-up progression
- Stationary biking and treadmill/outdoor walking
- Deep water pool program when incisions healed; focus on ROM
- Proprioception drills

#### **Weeks 4 to 6:**

##### Goals

- Reduce inflammation
- Full ROM
- Normal gait

##### Exercise progression

- Leg press, hamstrings curls
- Increase intensity of stationary bike program, may add elevation to treadmill walking and elliptical
- Advance intensity of deep water pool program; focus on endurance training

#### **Phase III – Advanced Strengthening and Endurance Training (Weeks 6 to 12):**

#### **Weeks 6 to 12:**

##### Goals

- Full knee flexion and extension with terminal stretch
- Progressive strengthening
- Increase muscular endurance

##### Exercise progression

- Weighted squat progression
- Lunge progression (retro, walk and split) as indicated
- Controlled movement series

#### **Weeks 8 to 12:**

##### Exercise progression

- Outdoor biking – week 8
- Lateral lunge progression – week 8-10
- Shallow water pool running – week 8-10
- Swimming free style – week 8-10
- Backward elevated treadmill walking - week 8-10
- Basic ladder series – week 10

#### **Phase IV – Advance Strengthening and Running progression (Weeks 12 to 24):**

##### Exercise progression – weeks 12-20

- Progress resistance with squat and lunge strengthening program, may add leg extensions at 30° - 0° (exclude patients with patellar or trochlear groove chondral pathology)
- Linear running progression
- Advanced ladder series
- Basic plyometric box progression
- Fit functional brace

##### Return to Sport and Functional Drills Phase (Weeks 20 to 24)

- Interval golf program
- Advance ladder, hurdle and plyo box progressions
- Sport specific field/court drills with brace on
- Non-contact drills

##### Sports test and follow-up with physician

- Follow-up examination with the physician
- Sports test for return to competition at 6 months