

# Total Knee Arthroplasty

The intent of this protocol is to provide the clinician with a guideline of the post-operative rehabilitation course of a patient that has undergone a Total Knee Replacement. It is by no means intended to be a substitute for one's clinical decision making regarding the progression of a patient's post-operative course based on their physical exam/findings, individual progress, and/or the presence of post-operative complications. If a clinician requires assistance in the progression of a post-operative patient they should consult with the referring Surgeon.

*This protocol is developed for primary total knee arthroplasty. Revision total knee arthroplasty should progress Phases I and II cautiously to allow adequate tissue healing.*

## Phase I-Immediate Post-Surgical Phase (Post-Operative Day 0-3):

### Goals:

- Enable patient to perform bed mobility and transfers out of bed to chair/toilet/commode as independently as possible
- Instruct patient on proper use of walker or crutches for ambulation and stair management
- Initiate home exercise program with emphasis on increasing ROM, decreasing edema, and pain
- Decrease inflammation, swelling, and pain

### Precautions:

- Weight bearing as tolerated (WBAT) with device unless otherwise noted by surgical team
- Range of motion as tolerated unless otherwise noted by team
- Avoid torque or twisting forces through operative knee, especially when weightbearing
- No exercise with weights or resistance
- Be vigilant for signs of DVT or peripheral nerve compromise

### Positioning:

- Nothing placed behind operative knee when supine
- Towel roll under ankle of involved extremity to promote knee extension
- Towel roll at trochanter of involved extremity to prevent hip external rotation and promote neutral alignment as needed

### Initial Assessment:

- Assess patient for any signs of post-operative complications including DVT (calf pain, abnormal swelling, erythema) and peripheral nerve compromise

- Ensure patient is pre-medicated prior to initial assessment as well as subsequent follow up treatments as needed to allow for adequate pain control. Cryotherapy may be recommended for 20 minutes post-therapy session to control pain and swelling
- Assess ROM and strength of involved joint, contralateral knee, and bilateral hip and ankle
- Assess overall strength and ability to perform functional mobility with appropriate assistive device

### **Initial Perioperative Pain Management:**

- Anesthesia at BWH for TKA includes:
  - Spinal anesthesia
  - General anesthesia
  - Spinal or general anesthesia with adductor canal block
- Post-operative pain control:
  - Pericapsular Injection
    - Injected directly into operative joint intraoperatively.
    - Combination of Ropivacaine, Epinephrine, Clonidine, and Ketorolac
  - Oral:
    - Centrally acting analgesics -Acetaminophen
    - Anti-inflammatories: Ibuprofen, Naproxen, Celecoxib
  - Steroids
  - Neuropathic pain medications
  - Opioids- short acting (Oxycodone, Dilaudid, Tramadol)
  - Intravenous (IV):
    - Ketorolac (Toradol)
    - Morphine or Dilaudid (for breakthrough pain)

### **Therapeutic Exercises:**

- Active, active-assisted, passive range of motion (A/AA/PROM) of involved joint in supine and sitting
- Ankle pumps (to decrease risk of DVT and help with edema reduction)
- Isometric exercises of quadriceps and gluteal muscles
- Straight Leg Raises (SLR) utilizing best quality quad control
- Closed chain exercises if patient's strength and balance permit e.g. weight shifting and sit to stand transfers

### **Bed Mobility/Transfers:**

- Educate on safe transfers using assistive device with no pivoting on operative knee
- Promote sitting out of bed multiple times/day with assistance/device as needed

**Gait Training:** WBAT with appropriate assistive device safely for household distances (at least 50ft-100ft) with assistance/supervision or independent as indicated

**Stair Training:** As indicated if discharge home with assistive device/assistance/supervision as needed



**Modalities:** Cryotherapy: 3-5X/day for 15-20 minutes at a time with either an ice/cold pack or cryocuff. Do not apply ice pack or cryotherapy wrap directly to skin.

#### **Criteria for Progression to the Next Phase:**

- Involved knee flexion ROM  $\geq 80$  degrees, knee extension  $\leq -10$  degrees
- Demonstrates good quadriceps contraction and independent SLR w/ minimal quad lag
- Independent/safe bed mobility/transfers with least restrictive assistive device
- Ambulating independently at least 100 ft with least restrictive assistive device
- If patient is unable to meet these goals prior to discharge from the hospital, inpatient rehabilitation may be indicated

## **Phase II – Mobility Phase (day 3- week 6):**

#### **Goals:**

- Increase A/AA/PROM to  $\geq 0-110$  degrees
- Decrease inflammation/edema
- Manage pain
- Increase strength of operative extremity with focus on knee flexion and extension and proximal hip strength
- Improve gait quality and progress towards unassisted ambulation at household and community distances
- Restore functional activities

## **Early Phase II (day 3- week 3):**

#### **Continue Positioning:**

- Nothing placed behind operative knee when supine
- Towel roll under ankle of involved extremity to promote knee extension
- Towel roll at trochanter of involved extremity to prevent hip external rotation and promote neutral alignment as needed

#### **Therapeutic Interventions**

- Targeted A/AA/PROM to involved joint
- Utilize stationary bicycle for AAROM
- Soft tissue mobilization
- Joint mobilizations including patellofemoral joint in all directions
- Scar Mobilization if well healed incision
- Gait training to wean from assistive device
- Initiate stair training
- Initiate resistance exercises as tolerated



- Initiate closed chain exercises such as step ups, leg press after good quad control
- Patient should be independent with Home Exercise Program

#### **Modalities:**

- Cryotherapy as indicated
- Compression- to control edema
- Neuromuscular Electrical Stimulation (NMES)- wean as quad control improves

## **Late Phase II (week 4- week 6):**

#### **Therapeutic Interventions**

- Maximize ROM – both flexion and extension
- Scar Mobilization if well healed incision
- Continue stationary bicycle for AROM
- Soft tissue mobilization if indicated
- Joint mobilizations including patellofemoral joint in all directions as indicated
- Gait training to wean from assistive device- transition to full weight bearing
- Stair training
- Resistance exercises as tolerated
- Closed chain exercises such as step ups, leg press with good quad control
- Neuromuscular and balance training
- Patient should be independent with Home Exercise Program

#### **Modalities:**

- Cryotherapy as indicated
- Compression- to control edema
- NMES may be useful for residual quad weakness and poor terminal knee extension quad control

#### **Outcome Measures:**

- Timed Up and Go (TUG) Test
- Knee Osteoarthritis Outcome Score (KOOS)
- Lower Extremity Functional Scale (LEFS)

#### **Criteria for Progression to the Next Phase:**

- AROM  $\geq$  0-110 degrees
- Minimal pain and edema
- Independent ambulation with/without the least restrictive assistive device for community distances ( $\geq$ 800 ft)
- Good quadriceps control



## Phase III – Intermediate Phase (weeks 7-12):

### Goals:

- Improve knee AROM to  $\geq$  0-120 degrees
- Improve overall strength of hip and knee to  $\geq$  4/5
- Ascend and descend stairs with reciprocal pattern
- Return to work as applicable
- Return to light recreational activities

### Therapeutic Interventions:

- As quad control normalizes discontinue use of NMES if not already weaned off NMES
- Progress closed chain exercises, adding resistance, weights, or full weight bearing in single-leg stance on operative limb
- Assess and address hip and trunk strength and motor control as indicated
- Step-ups and side step-up
- Higher level closed chain exercises such as squats, lunges, leg press
- Initiate or progress balance and proprioceptive exercise.
- Endurance training, walking/biking/pool

### Criteria for Progression to the Next Phase:

- ROM  $\geq$  120 degrees
- Strength  $\geq$  4/5 throughout LE
- Able to navigate stairs with reciprocal pattern
- Ambulating all surface levels (indoors/outdoors) with minimal to no gait deviations with or without an assistive device

## Phase IV – Return to Activity Phase (weeks 12-20):

### Goals

- Return to appropriate recreational activities
- Improve strength, balance, ROM, and endurance for all ADLs and recreational activities

### Therapeutic Exercises:

- Progress resistance and increase repetitions of previous exercises
- Increased distance/time/intensity of endurance training as tolerated
- Sport or activity specific training



### Considerations for Return to Sport

Current recommendations to maximize longevity and success of arthroplasty encourage return to activities considered low impact, such as: swimming, golfing, walking, or stationary biking. Higher impact activities including running, football, soccer, baseball/softball, singles tennis, hockey, and basketball are generally discouraged. Patients should check with their surgeon for advice regarding specific sports. Additionally, several studies have shown that a patient's level of prior experience with a recreational activity is an important consideration when recommending return to physically demanding tasks such as cross-country skiing, hiking, road biking or doubles tennis.

### Criteria for Discharge from Skilled Therapy:

- Pain free AROM of operative knee
- MMT strength  $\geq$  4+/5 knee flex/extension
- Return to recreational activities as directed by patient's goals
- Non-antalgic gait without device
- Reciprocal stair management
- Demonstrates good balance
- Independent with home exercise program, including ongoing quadriceps/hip strengthening

#### Authors:

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Carolyn Yuse, PT  
Clare Safran-Norton, PT  
Madhuri Kale, PT

Brendan Connor, PT  
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#### Initial Reviewers:

Ashley Dindial, PT  
Rachel Wilson, PT

