



Indiana University Health

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Sports Medicine and Arthroscopic Surgery
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Knee Osteochondritis Dissecans (OCD) or Osteochondral Lesion (OCL) Repair *(Updated 5/2025)*

General Post Op Instructions

Wound Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Dressings can be removed 2 days after surgery, or they can be removed at the first physical therapy appointment✓ If desired, incisions may be covered with simple dressings (band-aids)
Swelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Swelling and bruising are to be expected after a surgical procedure
Ice and Elevate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Ice 20 minutes on 20 minutes off, several times a day to help with swelling✓ Do not place ice or cold back directly onto the skin✓ Elevate the limb above the heart when able
Showering	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Do not soak incisions in water until after stitches are removed→ You may begin to shower 2 days after surgery after dressings are removed<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Allow soapy water to run over the incision but do not scrub○ Dry, apply band-aids if needed
Driving	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Dr. Call does not release patients to drive at a specific date or week post op✓ It is unlawful to drive under the influence of opioid (strong pain) medications✓ Must be able to safely apply the brakes before returning to drive✓ Driving in a brace/sling/boot is not recommended

Weight Bearing Restrictions and Brace Use

OCD or OCL Arthroscopic or Open reduction internal fixation (ORIF)	
Week 1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Flat foot up to 25% weight bearing in brace locked in extension✓ Brace locked in full extension, to be removed for hygiene and therapy only
Weeks 3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Flat foot up to 25% weight bearing in brace locked in extension✓ Brace unlocked to 90 degrees flexion for sitting
Weeks 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ 50% weight bearing with brace unlocked✓ Brace unlocked to full✓ May DC brace for sleep
Week 6 +	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ 75% weight bearing → WBAT✓ DC brace after WBAT, ambulating well without crutches, and has good quad strength



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Immediate Post Operative Phase (up to week 4)

Overall Goals	✓ Reduce swelling, effusion
Cautions	→ Follow weight bearing restrictions
Range of Motion	✓ Passive and Active Assisted ROM ✓ Achieve full extension as soon as possible ✓ Achieve 90 degrees of flexion by end of week 4
Therapeutic Suggestions	→ Patellar mobilization → Quad activation → Quad sets including 4-way SLR in brace → Heel slides → Upper body exercise bike (UBE) permitted
Progression Ready to Next Phase	✓ Pain free ROM ✓ Minimal to know effusion
	<i>If not all goals are met, patient may progress to the next phase with intervention plan in place to address deficiencies</i>

Intermediate Rehabilitation Phase (Weeks 5 – 8)

Overall Goals	✓ Improve motion and quad function
Cautions	→ Continue to emphasize home exercises
Range of Motion	✓ Begin AROM ✓ Achieve full flexion by end of week 6
Therapeutic Suggestions	→ Stationary cycling if flexion and swelling and pain allows → Progress quadriceps strengthening → Begin hip strengthening → Gait training → Begin proprioception activities of weight shifting, balance → Initiate light closed chain activities
Progression Ready to Next Phase	✓ Full ROM ✓ Good quad control



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Advance Strengthening Phase (Weeks 9 – 12)

Overall Goals	✓ Progress strengthening
Cautions	→ Prepare for hardware removal (if metal screws used for ORIF)
Range of Motion	✓ Full AROM
Therapeutic Suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Begin unilateral stance, balance training→ Progress hip, glutes, quad, hamstring strengthening→ Advance closed chain exercises such as wall sits, mini squats→ Stationary cycling permitted→ Add treadmill walking
Progression Ready	✓ Demonstrates reliable progress with exercises

Late Rehabilitation and Strengthening Phase (Week 13 – 24+)

Overall Goals	✓ Reduce swelling and inflammation if hardware removal performed ✓ Progress functional activity
Cautions	→ If metal screws were used for fixation, hardware removal will likely done 12-14 weeks post op → Emphasize importance of home exercises
Range of Motion	✓ Full unrestricted ROM
Therapeutic Suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Post hardware removal rehab<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Patellar mobilizations○ Reduce effusion○ Rapid return to pre-hardware removal exercises once skin incisions have healed○ Achieve full ROM○ WBAT with crutches for 2 weeks→ Begin antigravity treadmill jogging→ Core and trunk strengthening→ Add elliptical→ Continue previous exercises→ Week 16: begin agility training→ Week 20: add low amplitude landing mechanics<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Med ball squat catches, shallow jump landings, etc
Return to Sports	✓ 6 months post op if functionally able