

SIMPLE MENISCUS REPAIR: CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE

Disclaimer

The following rehabilitation guidelines are specific to patients who have undergone a standard meniscus repair. Please refer to the Ohio States Sports Medicine website for rehabilitation guidelines specific to other procedures and conditions, as appropriate. If the patient has undergone a meniscus repair for a root, radial or horizontal cleavage tear, please refer to the Advanced Meniscus Repair Clinical Practice Guideline.

Progression is criterion-based and dependent on soft tissue healing, patient demographics, and clinical evaluation. The time frames identified for each phase of rehabilitation are approximate times for the average patient and not recommended as guidelines for progression for the individual patient. It is recommended that progression is based upon the achievement of functional criteria demonstrating readiness for progression, noted at the end of each phase.

The rehabilitation recommendations below are based upon the guidance of content experts, surgeons, and evidence-based practice. Progression through each phase, after precautions have been lifted, is based on the patient demonstrating readiness by achieving the listed functional criteria.



Summary of Recommendations

Precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WBing and bracing recommendations are based on tear morphology and intra-operative findings. Recommendations are below. However, ALWAYS refer to the operative note or contact the surgical team for clarification. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No forced flexion ROM beyond 90° x4 WEEKS No CKC exercises >60° x 6 WEEKS
Risk Factors	<p>The patient should be monitored for signs and symptoms of DVT (see Red/Yellow Flag section)</p>
Weight Bearing/Bracing	<p>WBAT, with a goal of crutch discharge by 4 weeks</p> <p>This recommendation is based on multiple factors and may not always be accurate. The surgeon will outline the WBing prescription in the “post-op plan” section of the operative note. Always refer to the operative note for for WBing status confirmation and/or contact the surgical team for clarification.</p>
Range of Motion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Week 0-4: 0-90° Week 4+: full AROM <p><i>Symmetrical knee extension should be achieved by week 4. If not achieved by week 4, contact surgeon</i></p>
Outcome Tools	<p>Collect the LEFS at each visit</p> <p><i>You may choose to include IKDC, KOOS, ACL-RSI, Tegner or other questionnaires specific to your patient’s needs</i></p>
Functional Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isometric Testing - 8 weeks Isokinetic Testing – 12 weeks Hop testing: <u>should not be performed prior to 4 months post-op and is only appropriate after 80% symmetry is achieved on isokinetic testing</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SL hop for distance Triple hop Cross over hop Timed 6m hop <p><i>*Functional strength testing and hop testing should be reserved for patients returning to high level activity*</i></p>
Criteria to Discharge Assistive Device	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ROM: Full active knee extension; no pain on passive overpressure Strength: Able to perform strong quad isometric with full tetany and superior patellar glide and able to perform 2x10 SLR without quad lag Effusion: 1+ or less is preferred (2+ acceptable if all other criteria are met) Weight Bearing: Demonstrates pain-free ambulation without visible gait deviation
Criteria to D/C NMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <20% quad deficit on isometric testing If Biodex not available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 SLR without quad lag Normal gait 10 heel taps to 60° knee flexion with good quality 10 rep max on leg press and similar effort bilaterally Inability to break quad MMT (5/5)



Criteria to Initiate Running and Jumping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ROM: full, pain-free knee ROM, symmetrical with the uninvolved limb • Strength: Isokinetic testing 80% or greater for hamstring and quad at 60°/sec and 300°/sec • Effusion: 1+ or less • Weight Bearing: normalized gait and jogging mechanics • Neuromuscular Control: Pain-free hopping in place
Criteria to Return to Sports Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ROM: full, pain-free knee ROM, symmetrical with the uninvolved limb • Strength: Isokinetic testing 90% or greater for hamstring and quad at 60°/sec and 300°/sec • Effusion: No reactive effusion ≥ 1+ with sport-specific activity • Weight Bearing: normalized gait and jogging mechanics • Neuromuscular control: appropriate mechanics and force attenuation strategies with high level agility, plyometrics, and high impact movements • Functional Hop Testing: LSI 90% or greater for all tests • Physician Clearance
Return to Sport Expectation	4-6 months depending on type of repair, patient's goals and sports-specific demands

RED/YELLOW FLAGS

<p>Red Flags</p> <p><i>Require immediate referral for re-evaluation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of DVT → <i>Refer directly to ED</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Localized tenderness along the distribution of deep venous system ○ Entire LE swelling ○ Calf swelling >3cm compared to asymptomatic limb ○ Pitting edema ○ Collateral superficial veins • Lack of full knee extension by 4 weeks post-op → <i>Refer to surgeon for re-evaluation</i> • Mechanical block or clunk → <i>Refer to surgeon for re-evaluation</i> • Reported episodes of instability → <i>Refer to surgeon for re-evaluation</i>
<p>Yellow Flags</p> <p><i>Require modifications to plan of care</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent reactive effusion or pain following therapy or ADLs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Decrease intensity of rehab interventions, continue effusion management, educate patient regarding activity modifications until symptoms resolve</i>

Phase I: Protection (Post-Operative—6 weeks)

Goals	Protect repair, restore ROM, minimize effusion and pain while adhering to all post-operative precautions
Pain and Effusion	Effusion management strategies: cryotherapy and compression as appropriate
ROM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 0-4: 0-90° • Week 4+: full AROM <p><i>Symmetrical knee extension should be achieved by week 4. If not achieved by week 4, contact surgeon</i></p>



Weight Bearing	<p>WBAT, with a goal of crutch discharge by 4 weeks</p> <p>This recommendation is based on multiple factors and may not always be accurate. <i>The surgeon will outline the WBing prescription in the “post-op plan” section of the operative note. Always refer to the operative note for for WBing status confirmation and/or contact the surgical team for clarification.</i></p>
Suggested Interventions	<p>Precaution: No CKC exercises >60° x 6 WEEKS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ankle pumps • Quadriceps, hamstring and gluteal isometrics • Diaphragmatic breathing • Effusion management strategies (RICE) • <u>Extension ROM</u>: Seated towel stretch, bag hang (<i>Appendix A</i>) • <u>Flexion ROM</u>: no forced flexion past 90° for the first 4 weeks post-op <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Heel slides, wall slides, upright cycling (starting week 2 for ROM only, ½ revolutions → full revolutions) • Strong emphasis on patellar mobilizations – all directions • Prone TKE • SLR-4 way <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider progression with progressing to seated, eyes closed, holds, pulses, ABCs • Gait training (as appropriate per WBing status and post-op precautions) • SAQ (unweighted) • LAQ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unweighted, through protected range, 90°-45° (weeks 0-4) ○ Unweighted, through full range (weeks 4-6) • Clamshell • Add lumbopelvic stability training (TrA progression, prone/side planks, ect) • NMES (see below for parameters) • Balance/proprioception <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Standing TKE (perform through phases of gait) ○ SLS – eyes open → eyes closed
NMES Parameters (Appendix B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMES pads are placed on the proximal and distal quadriceps • Patient: Seated with the knee in at least 60° flexion, shank secured with strap and back support with thigh strap preferred. The ankle pad/belt should be two finger widths superior to the lateral malleoli • The patient is instructed to relax while the e-stim generates at least 50% of their max volitional quadriceps contraction OR maximal tolerable amperage without knee joint pain • 20 seconds on/ 50 seconds off x 15 min
Criteria to Discharge Assistive Device	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ROM: Full active knee extension; no pain on passive overpressure • Strength: Able to perform strong quad isometric with full tetany and superior patellar glide and able to perform 2x10 SLR without quad lag • Effusion: 1+ or less is preferred (2+ acceptable if all other criteria are met) • Weight Bearing: Demonstrates pain-free ambulation without visible gait deviation
Criteria to Progress to Early Loading Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pain-free knee flexion of >120 degrees • Pain-free and full passive knee extension • Proficient heel-to-toe gait without assistive device • Reduced and well-controlled post-operative pain and edema • Ability to perform a strong isometric quadriceps contraction (full tetany and superior patellar glide) and SLR without evidence of quad lag



- Proficiency with home-exercise program

Phase II: Early Loading (7-9 Weeks)

Goals	Emphasis is placed on normalizing ROM, improving quadriceps/gluteal/core strength and safe progression towards functional loading
Pain and Effusion	Cryotherapy/compression as needed for reactive effusion
ROM	Full and pain-free ROM <i>Symmetrical knee extension should be achieved by week 4. If not achieved by week 4, contact surgeon</i>
Weight Bearing	FWBing with normalized gait pattern
Suggested Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Phase I interventions and effusion management strategies • Multi-angle knee isometrics from 90-60 degrees • OKC Knee Extension (90-45° ROM) (week 6+) • Bridges • Side steps/monster walks • Progress SLS (compliant surfaces, dynamic movements) • Partial BW Shuttle Press (DL→SL) • Closed Chain exercises: No CKC exercises >90° x 8 WEEKS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini-squats, wall sits, heel raises • Heel Taps: starting at 2" step and progressing per patient's tolerance/ability • Step Ups: starting at 4-6" step and progressing per patient's tolerance/ability • Initiate resisted hamstring strengthening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OKC hamstring strengthening (DL → SL) • SB HS curl progression • Continue NMES
Functional Testing	Isometric testing: 8+ weeks
Criteria to Progress to Strengthening and Return to Function Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ROM: full and pain-free AROM and normalized patellofemoral mobility • Effusion: <1+ • Strength: Quadriceps set with normal superior patellar translation, SLR x10" without extensor lag • WB: normalized gait, able to tolerate CKC therex program without increased pain or effusion

Phase III: Strengthening/Return to Function (10-15 Weeks)

Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress functional balance/NM control • Progress LE strengthening • Progress core stability
Pain and Effusion	Monitor reactive effusion as progressive loading is performed
ROM	Full ROM with no complaints of pain with end-range overpressure
Weight Bearing	FWB with normalized gait pattern
Suggested Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Phase I/II interventions and effusion management as appropriate



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to progress balance and proprioception interventions per patient's tolerance • BOSU squats (DL → SL) • Resisted OKC quadriceps strengthening through full ROM (monitor PF symptoms) • Stationary lunges → walking lunges • SL sit to stand, through protected ROM • Core strengthening • Conditioning (permitted at 12+ weeks) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Elliptical ○ Treadmill walking ○ Freestyle swimming (no fins until week 16) • Continue NMES until 80% symmetry is obtained (see criteria to discharge below)
Functional Testing	<p>Isokinetic testing: 12+ weeks <i>Jogging should be avoided until at least 12 weeks</i> <i>Impact activities should be avoided until 12-16 weeks</i></p>
Criteria to Discharge NMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <20% quad deficit on isometric testing OR if Biodex machine is not available: • 10 SLR without quad lag • Normal gait • 10 heel taps to 60 deg knee flexion with good quality • 10 rep max on Leg Press and similar effort bilaterally • Inability to break quad MMT
Criteria to Progress to Return to Activity Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ROM: maintain full, pain free AROM • Effusion: <1+ • Strength: 80% LSI (isometric testing or alternative measure – see <i>Appendix D</i>) • Weight Bearing: able to tolerate therapeutic exercise program without increased pain or >1+ effusion • NM control: demonstrates proper lower extremity mechanics with all therapeutic exercises

Phase IV: Return to Activity (4 – 6 months)

Goals	Progress OKC interventions. Patients should continue skilled physical therapy to progress functional strengthening. Strength testing is performed to determine readiness to initiate Phase V (RTS).
Pain and Effusion	Monitor reactive effusion as progressive loading performed
ROM	Full ROM with no complaints of pain with end-range overpressure
Weight Bearing	FWB with normalized gait pattern
Functional Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isokinetic Testing – 12+ weeks • Hop testing: <i>should not be performed prior to 4 months post-op and is only appropriate after 80% symmetry is achieved on isokinetic testing</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SL hop for distance ○ Triple hop ○ Cross over hop ○ Timed 6m hop <p><i>*Functional strength testing and hop testing should be reserved for patients returning to high level activity*</i></p>



Suggested Interventions	<p>Performance of the quadriceps, hamstrings and trunk dynamic stability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SL squats, SL sit to stand, progress resistance on leg extension/leg curl/leg press machine, RDLs, lunges (multi-direction), crunches, rotational trunk exercises on static and dynamic surfaces, monster walks • Single-leg squats on BOSU with manual perturbation to trunk or legs, Single-leg BOSU balance with perturbation/dynamic movement, single-leg BOSU Romanian deadlift <p>Once strength criteria have been met, perform the following progression:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PBW jumping on the shuttle (DL → SL) • Full body weight jumping progression • Walk-jog program
Criteria to Initiate Running and Jumping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ROM: full, pain-free knee ROM, symmetrical with the uninvolved limb • Strength: Isokinetic testing 80% or greater for hamstring and quad at 60°/sec and 300°/sec • Effusion: 1+ or less • Weight Bearing: normalized gait and jogging mechanics • Neuromuscular Control: Pain-free hopping in place
Criteria to Progress to Return to Sport Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quadriceps and hamstring symmetry of 80% or greater • Ability to tolerate walking distances of 3 miles or greater without reactive pain or effusion • Ability to effectively negotiate uneven ground, including soft sand, without reactive pain or effusion • Ability to return to pre-operative low-impact recreational activities, including cycling, elliptical and weight training

Phase V: Return to Sport (6 months - RTS)

Goals	The patient is able to resume all normal functionality and will continue to progress towards return to sport
Pain and Effusion	Monitor reactive effusion as progressive loading performed
ROM	Full ROM with no complaints of pain during end-range overpressure
Weight Bearing	FWB with normalized gait pattern
Functional Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isokinetic Testing – 12+ weeks • Hop testing: <i>should not be performed prior to 4 months post-op and is only appropriate after 80% symmetry is achieved on isokinetic testing</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SL hop for distance ○ Triple hop ○ Cross over hop ○ Timed 6m hop <p><i>*Functional strength testing and hop testing should be reserved for patients returning to high level activity*</i></p>
Suggested Interventions	<p>Continue progressive strength training per previous phases</p> <p><u>Agility</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin agility exercises between 50-75% effort (utilize visual feedback to improve mechanics as needed) • Advance plyometrics: Bilateral to single leg, progress by altering surfaces, adding ball toss, 3D rotations, etc.



- Side shuffling, Carioca, Figure 8, Zig-zags, Resisted jogging (Sports Cord) in straight planes, backpedaling

Plyometrics

- Single-leg hop downs from increasing height (up to 12" box), Single-leg hop-holds, Double and single-leg hopping onto unstable surface, Double and single-leg jump turns, Repeated tuck jumps

Sport and position specific training

Criteria for Return to Sport

- **ROM:** full, pain free knee ROM, symmetrical with the uninvolved limb
- **Strength:** Isokinetic testing 90% or greater for hamstring and quad at 60°/sec and 300°/sec
- **Effusion:** No reactive effusion ≥ 1+ with sport-specific activity
- **Weight Bearing:** normalized gait and jogging mechanics
- **Neuromuscular Control:** appropriate mechanics and force attenuation strategies with high level agility, plyometrics, and high impact movements
- **Functional Hop Testing:** LSI 90% or greater for all tests
- **Physician Clearance**



Appendix A: Bag Hang

Emphasis on low load, long duration stretching

- Goal: 60 minutes of bag hang time total per day.
- Ideally: 4x15 minutes (or greater) per day



Appendix B: NMES Set Up

2 or 4 pad set-up is appropriate

- NMES pads are placed on the proximal and distal quadriceps
- Patient: Seated with the knee in at least 60° flexion, shank secured with strap and back support with thigh strap preferred. The ankle pad/belt should be two finger widths superior to the lateral malleoli
- The patient is instructed to relax while the e-stim generates at least 50% of their max volitional contraction against a fixed resistance OR maximal tolerable amperage without knee joint pain
- 10-20 seconds on/ 50 seconds off x 15 min








Appendix C: Isokinetic Data Interpretation



		Definition	Clinical Impact	What to do
A	Peak Torque (ft-lbs)	Peak torque during repetitions	Symmetry criteria (see 'E'- this is the data represented in pie charts)	If <80%; continue unilateral, high resistance strength training
B	Coefficient of Variance (%)	Between repetition variability	Goal: < 15%	If >15%, consider retest
C	Total Work (ft-lbs)	Torque over all repetitions	Possible indicator of fatigue	If >10%; consider high volume training
D	Agonist/Antagonist Ratio (%)	Hamstring/Quadriceps Ratio	Goal: >60%	<60%; ensure 1:1 quadriceps:hamstring exercise ratio
E	Limb Symmetry Pie Charts	Strength relative to involved limb	Goal: <10% asymmetry (either direction- deficit OR stronger on involved limb)	If <80%, continue NMES in addition to strength training If <90%, continue unilateral > bilateral strength training emphasis

Appendix D: Isokinetic Testing and Appropriate Alternatives

Sinacore, J. A., Evans, A. M., Lynch, B. N., Joreitz, R. E., Irrgang, J. J., & Lynch, A. D. (2017). Diagnostic accuracy of handheld dynamometry and 1-repetition-maximum tests for identifying meaningful quadriceps strength asymmetries. *Journal of orthopaedic & sports physical therapy*, 47(2), 97-107.

<p>Isokinetic Dynamometry</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered the “gold standard” • 60°/sec for strength and power assessment • 300°/second for speed and endurance assessment
<p>Hand Held Dynamometry with Static Fixation at 90°</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate alternative • Results may overestimate quadriceps strength symmetry: be cautious with data interpretation
<p>SL 1RM Knee Extension Machine: 90° - 45°</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate alternative • Recommended to decrease stress on PF joint and limit strain on reconstructed ACL for up to 6 months • Results may overestimate quadriceps strength symmetry: be cautious with data interpretation
<p>SL 1RM Leg Press</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair alternative • Results in significant overestimation of quadriceps strength symmetry due to compensation from other LE muscle groups
<p>SL 1RM Knee Extension Machine: 90° - 0°</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair alternative • May be uncomfortable and/or inappropriate due to PF stress



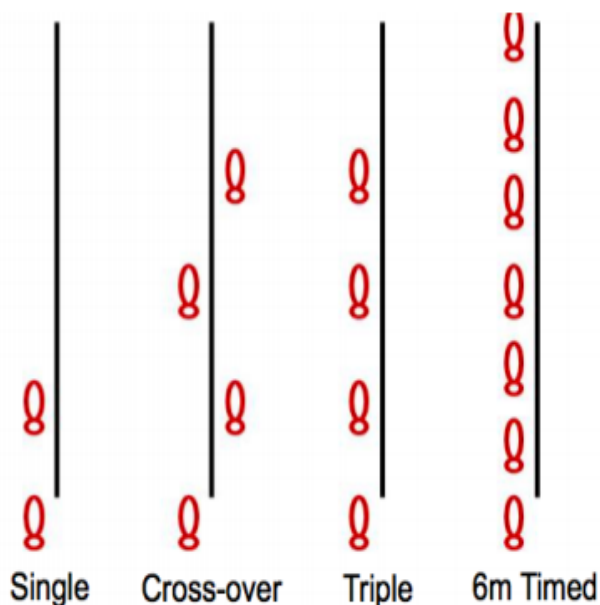
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Appendix E: Single Leg Hop Series

- 1) **Single hop for distance:** Have the subject line their heel up with the zero mark of the tape measure, wearing athletic shoes. The subject then hops as far as he/she can, landing on the same push off leg, for at least 3 seconds. The arms are allowed to move freely during the testing. Allow him/her to perform 2 practice hops on each leg. Then, have the subject perform 2 testing trial, recording each distance from the starting point to the back of the heel. Average the distanced hopped for each limb. The Limb Symmetry Index: $\text{Involved limb distance} / \text{Uninvolved limb distance} \times 100\%$.
- 2) **Cross-over hop for distance:** The subject lines their heel up with the zero mark of the tape measure and hops 3 times on one foot, crossing fully over the center line each time. Each subject should hop as far forward as he/she can on each hop, but only the total distance hopped is recorded. The arms are allowed to move freely during the testing. Allow him/her to perform 2 practice hops on each leg. Then, have the subject perform 2 testing trial, recording each distance from the starting point to the back of the heel. Average the distanced hopped for each limb. The Limb Symmetry Index: $\text{Involved limb distance} / \text{Uninvolved limb distance} \times 100\%$.
- 3) **Triple hop for distance:** The subject lines their heel up with the zero mark of the tape measure and hops 3 times on one foot. Each subject should hop as far forward as he/she can on each hop, but only the total distance hopped is recorded. The arms are allowed to move freely during the testing. Allow him/her to perform 2 practice hops on each leg. Then, have the subject perform 2 testing trial, recording each distance from the starting point to the back of the heel. Average the distanced hopped for each limb. The Limb Symmetry Index: $\text{Involved limb distance} / \text{Uninvolved limb distance} \times 100\%$.
- 4) **Timed 6-meter hop:** The subject lines their heel up at the zero mark of the tape measure and hops, on cue with the tester, as fast as they can the length of the 6-meter tape. The arms are allowed to move freely during the testing. Allow him/her to perform 2 practice hops on each leg. Then, have the subject perform 2 testing trial, recording each distance from the starting point to the back of the heel. Average the distanced hopped for each limb. The Limb Symmetry Index: $\text{Involved limb time} / \text{Uninvolved limb time} \times 100\%$.



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Created: June 2020

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