

Patella Fracture ORIF Rehabilitation Protocol

Stephanie A. Boden, MD

Diagnosis: Patellar Fracture

PT Frequency: 2-4 times per week

Brace: Locked in extension x 6 weeks

ROM Restrictions: 0-10° only while not ambulating x 4 weeks → progress per below

Weightbearing: WBAT with crutches and brace

PHASE I (Weeks 0 – 4): Home Exercises

- **Weightbearing:** Weight bear as tolerated with crutches and brace
- **Brace:** Locked in full extension during day and sleeping (remove for hygiene).
- **Range of Motion:** 0-10° only while not ambulating.
- **Home Exercises:** Heel slides, Quad Sets, patellar mobs, SLR, calf pumps to prevent DVT

Phase II (Weeks 4 – 6): Start Physical Therapy

- **Weightbearing:** Full with crutches in brace
- **Brace:** Locked in full extension during day and sleeping (remove for hygiene).
- **Range of Motion:** 0-30° only when not ambulating
- **Therapeutic Exercises:** Advance Phase I exercises, gait training.
 - **No weight bearing with flexion >90°
 - Patellar scar tissue mobilization

Phase III (Weeks 6 – 12)

- **Weightbearing:** Full weight bearing without brace; discontinue brace/crutches
- **Brace:** None
- **Range of Motion:** Weeks 6-7: 0-45° → Weeks 7-8: 0-60° → Weeks 8-10: 0-90° → Weeks 10-12: 0-120°
- **Therapeutic Exercises:**
 - Advance phase II exercises
 - Initiate side-lying hip/core/glutes, and weightbearing calf raises
 - Initiate hamstring work, lunges/leg press 0-90°, proprioception, balance/core/hip/glutes, stationary biking
 - Patellar scar tissue mobilization

Phase IV (Weeks 12 - 20)

- **Weightbearing:** Full weight bearing without brace; discontinue brace/crutches
- **Range of Motion:** Full range of motion
- **Therapeutic Exercises:** Advance phase III exercises and functional activities: single leg balance work, core/glutes, eccentric hamstrings, elliptical, stationary bike and swimming
 - Advance to sport-specific drills and running/jumping (week 20 plus)