

Physiotherapy — Advice Letter for ACL Rehabilitation after Reconstruction

THE CASE NOTES

Patient: Miss Sophia Nakamura, 27 years old; recreational football player

Surgery: Right ACL reconstruction with patellar tendon graft (day 5 post-op); brace in locked extension for first 2 weeks while walking

Phase 1 goals (weeks 1–6): Reduce swelling, restore quadriceps activation, achieve full passive extension, regain 0–90 degrees flexion by week 6

Phase 1 home exercises: (1) Quad sets: tighten quadriceps for 5 seconds, 3 sets of 15 reps, 3 times daily. (2) Straight leg raises: 3 sets of 10 reps, twice daily — brace locked when doing this. (3) Heel slides: gently bend knee towards 90 degrees, 3 sets of 10 reps, twice daily. (4) Ankle pumps for circulation: 20 reps each direction, every 2 hours.

Precautions: Brace must remain locked at 0 degrees (full extension) during ambulation for 2 weeks; no full weight-bearing without crutches for first 10 days; do not force flexion past the point of resistance

Swelling management: Ice for 15–20 minutes after exercises; elevate leg above heart when resting

Warning signs: Increased warmth, redness, wound discharge, fever, or calf pain and swelling (DVT risk) — contact the clinic immediately

Next review: In-clinic physiotherapy session at week 2; brace and gait reassessment

Task: Write an advice letter to Miss Nakamura explaining her home exercise programme and the precautions she must observe in the first two weeks after surgery.

Task: Write an advice letter to Miss Nakamura explaining her home exercise programme and the precautions must observe in the first two weeks after surgery.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

+ The four exercises with sets, reps and frequency

The patient must be able to perform the programme without supervision. Exercises without a clear prescription cannot be followed correctly.

+ The brace-locked-in-extension precaution during walking for 2 weeks

The graft is most vulnerable in the first 2 weeks. An unlocked brace during ambulation risks graft failure. This must be stated explicitly with the duration.

+ The DVT warning: calf pain and swelling with warmth or redness — contact immediately

DVT is a real post-surgical risk. Calf symptoms in the operated limb can be confused with normal post-op discomfort.

WHAT TO LEAVE OUT

– The full ACL reconstruction surgical technique

One orientation sentence is enough. The patient had this explained by the surgeon.

– Phase 2 and phase 3 goals and exercises

This is a phase 1 letter. Introducing later phases creates confusion about what to do now.

CRITERION IN FOCUS · ORGANISATION & LAYOUT

OET Case Notes

Physiotherapy · Intermediate · Advice letter · to Patient

oetwritingcorrection.com

ACL rehabilitation letters organise naturally into: (1) what the exercises are and how to do them, (2) the brace and weight-bearing rules, (3) swelling management, (4) when to seek help. When exercises and precautions are mixed together, the patient cannot tell what to do from what to avoid.

Write this letter, then get it marked at oetwritingcorrection.com/oet-writing-services

oetwritingcorrection.com