

Medial Collateral Ligament (MCL) Rehabilitation Protocol

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Grade 1 Injuries:

WBAT with crutches if necessary
Active ROM exercises to achieve full ROM as tolerated
~~Active strengthening exercises-open and closed chain as tolerated~~
Progress agility, proprioceptive and sport specific drills as tolerated
Return to sports when motion, strength, agility and proprioception are equal
Bracing is encouraged for contact sports to prevent valgus forces

Grade 2 Injuries:

Long-leg brace with WBAT with crutches
Brace may be locked 1-2 weeks depending on pain, alignment and opening
Active ROM exercises started immediately in brace (if opened) or out of brace if locked in extension
E-stim, quad sets, SLR started immediately
Brace is opened at end of post injury week 3 and FWB encouraged
Discontinuation of brace is dependent on pain, alignment and laxity
Week 3: once full ROM and functional strength attained, agility and proprioceptive drills may begin, including straight line approach
Week 5-6: Progress to sprinting and sports specific functional agility drills as tolerated
Return to sports when motion, strength and proprioception are equal, can perform sports specific activities and valgus opening eliminated pending physician's exam. This is generally between 5 and 6 weeks post injury.
Bracing is encouraged for contact sports or high risk sports to prevent valgus forces

Grade 3 Injuries:

Long leg brace locked in extension for 3-6 weeks depending on alignment. NWB for 3 weeks if significant valgus alignment. TTWB otherwise.
Quad sets, SLR E-stim, started immediately
Non-valgus aligned patients: immediate ROM out of brace 2-3 times a day. Brace unlocked at 3 weeks and progressive weight bearing.



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Valgus-aligned patients: ROM after 3 weeks. Brace locked for 6 weeks for ambulation with weight bearing depending on degree of laxity.
Closed chain exercises started depending upon patient's weight bearing status.
Progressive ROM and strengthening similar to patients with grad 2 injuries
Bracing is encouraged for all sports for 6-12 months.
