



**DR. NEILL VAN DER WALT**  
*MBChB(UP), FCS Orth(SA), MMedi(UKZN), FAOA(AUS)*  
**ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON**  
Practice no. 0815802

# Patella Dislocation Rehab

With special thanks to Associate Professor Justin Roe (MBBS, FRACS) and the North Sydney Orthopaedic Research Group



## PHASE I: (Immediate) - Week 1

### Orthotics

1. Knee Brace at all times other than for exercises

### Weight Bearing

1. Touch Weight Bearing using 2 crutches

### Modalities as needed

1. Ice, compression, and elevation as needed
2. Electrical stimulation for pain or muscle re-education if available
3. Ice for 20 minutes following exercises throughout the protocol
4. Moist heat and/or Pulsed Ultrasound after 48 hours

### Range of Motion

1. Post-Op patients:
  - a. Gravity-assisted ROM from 0 to 45° flexion only
  - b. NO Active knee extension
2. Non-Op patients:
  - a. Progress ROM exercises from 0 to 90° flexion only
  - b. NO Active knee extension

### Exercises

1. Hamstring, Calf, and IT Band stretching
2. Quad & Hamstring sets - Isometric
3. Ankle pumps
4. Straight leg raises
  - a. Standing position ONLY
  - b. NO resistance
  - c. Must be performed in knee immobilizer

## PHASE II: (Intermediate) - Week 2 & 3

### Orthotics

1. Knee Immobilizer at night and for all weight bearing activities
2. Patellar stabilizing orthotic may be prescribed per physician

### Weight Bearing

1. Weight Bearing as tolerated using Knee Immobilizer for comfort

### Modalities as needed

1. Continue Phase I modalities as needed

### ROM

Post-Op patients - At the start of Week 3:

- a. May progress ROM exercises to 0 to 90° as tolerated
- b. NO Active knee extension

Non-Op patients - At the start of Week 2:

- a. May progress ROM to full as tolerated
- b. NO Active knee extension

### Exercises

1. Progress Phase I exercises as tolerated
2. Proprioception / Weight shifting exercises
3. Straight Leg Raises while supine
  - a. NO resistance
4. Neuromuscular Re-education as needed

## PHASE III (Strengthening) - Week 4-6

### Orthotics

1. Should be progressing to patellar stabilizing orthotic for all activities

### Weight Bearing

1. Weight Bearing as tolerated using orthotic

### ROM

1. Post-Op patients:
  - a. May progress ROM exercises to full as tolerated
2. Non-Op patients:
  - a. Attain / Maintain full active and passive knee ROM

## Exercises

1. Progress Phase II exercises as tolerated
2. May add resistance to Straight Leg Raises as tolerated
3. Stationary Bicycle
  - a. Progress resistance and duration as tolerated
4. Shuttle / Leg Press
  - a. Bilateral, progress to Unilateral
  - b. Progress resistance
5. When patient's reach 0 to 120° of pain-free Active ROM, progress to:
  - a. Open Chain exercises, progress resistance as tolerated
  - b. Short-arc Quads, progress to Long-arc
  - c. Long-arc Hamstrings
  - d. Closed Chain exercises, progress as tolerated - Terminal Knee Extensions, Mini-Squats, Step Ups, etc
6. Aquatics

## PHASE IV (Advanced Strengthening) - Week 6 and on

### Orthotics

1. May discontinue brace for daily activities only with physician approval
2. Continue functional brace for high risk activity and exercise until notified by physician

### Range of Motion

1. Maintain full active and passive ROM

### Exercises

1. Progress Phase III exercises as tolerated
2. Progress to aggressive full-arc strengthening Isotonic strengthening
3. Isokinetics