

VIBEMOTION LABS · ATHLETE RECOVERY

PHASE 1 OF 5

Pain Control & *Protection*

\$17

The immediate response protocol. Control pain and swelling, protect the injury, and begin gentle movement to prevent stiffness — all without slowing the healing process. Timeline: Days 0–14 · Pain target: Reduce to $\leq 2/10$ at rest

What this phase achieves

- Reduce acute pain to a manageable level ($\leq 2/10$ at rest)
- Control swelling and effusion in the affected joint or tissue
- Maintain basic range of motion to prevent stiffness
- Preserve surrounding muscle activity to slow atrophy
- Establish a pain-free baseline for Phase 2 progression

Pain monitoring rule

Before each session, record your pain score (0–10). If pain is above 4/10, do not exercise — rest and reassess the next day. During each exercise, pain must stay at or below 3/10. Stop immediately if pain spikes above this. After each session, pain should return to baseline within 30 minutes. If it does not, reduce intensity.

DAILY MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

Ice, Compression & Elevation

Apply this protocol 3–4 times daily for the first 72 hours, then 2 times daily until swelling is resolved.

METHOD	HOW TO APPLY	DURATION	KEY NOTES
Ice Application	Crushed ice in a damp cloth — never directly on skin.	15–20 min per session	Allow 45 min between sessions. Stop if skin becomes numb before 15 min.
Compression	Elastic compression bandage applied distal to proximal (start furthest from heart).	Continuous until swelling resolves	Should feel firm but never painful. Loosen if tingling or skin colour changes.
Elevation	Raise the injured limb above heart level using pillows or a wedge.	20 min, 3–4x daily	Most effective combined with ice. Maintain during sleep where comfortable.

PHASE 1 EXERCISES

Perform these exercises once daily. All movements must remain pain-free ($\leq 3/10$). These are gentle activation and mobility drills — not strength training.

01 Ankle Pumps

Circulation /
Swelling

SETS	REPS / DURATION	LOAD / RESISTANCE	TEMPO	REST
3	20 reps	Bodyweight only	2 sec up / 2 sec down	30 sec between sets

HOW TO PERFORM

1. Sit in a chair or lie on your back with your leg elevated on a pillow.
2. Starting with your foot in a neutral position, slowly pull your toes toward your shin as far as comfortable.
3. Hold for 1 second at the top, feeling a gentle stretch in the back of your lower leg.
4. Slowly point your toes away from you as far as comfortable.
5. Hold for 1 second at the bottom.
6. Return to neutral and repeat without rushing.

COACHING CUES

- *Move through your full comfortable range — do not push into pain.*
- *Keep the movement smooth and controlled — this is not a speed drill.*
- *You should feel gentle muscle activation, not sharp discomfort.*

PROGRESS WHEN

When you can complete 3 × 20 with zero pain and swelling does not increase after the session.

■ *Stop immediately if sharp, shooting, or nerve-like pain occurs.*

02 Seated Calf Raises

Calf / Soleus
Activation

SETS	REPS / DURATION	LOAD / RESISTANCE	TEMPO	REST
3	15 reps	Bodyweight	2 sec rise / 1 hold / 3 sec lower	45 sec

HOW TO PERFORM

1. Sit upright in a sturdy chair with both feet flat on the floor, hip-width apart.
2. Press evenly through the balls of both feet and slowly raise both heels off the ground.
3. Pause at the top — you should feel your calf muscles contract firmly.
4. Slowly lower your heels back to the floor over 3 seconds, resisting gravity on the way down.

5. Do not let your heels crash down — control the entire descent.
6. If bilateral (both feet) is pain-free, progress to performing the exercise on the injured side only.

COACHING CUES

- *Think 'tall through the crown' — don't let your torso collapse forward.*
- *The slower the lowering phase, the more muscle activation you create.*
- *If you feel cramping, stop, dorsiflex the foot gently, and rest 2 minutes before continuing.*

PROGRESS WHEN

When 3 × 15 bilateral is pain-free — then begin single-leg version.

03 Supine Heel Slides

Hip Flexor /
Quad / Knee
ROM

SETS	REPS / DURATION	LOAD / RESISTANCE	TEMPO	REST
3	12 reps per leg	Bodyweight	Slow and controlled	30 sec

HOW TO PERFORM

1. Lie flat on your back on a firm surface with both legs extended.
2. Keeping your heel in contact with the surface, slowly slide your heel toward your buttocks by bending your knee and hip.
3. Slide as far as comfortable — stop before any sharp pain.
4. Hold the bent position for 2 seconds.
5. Slowly slide your heel back to the starting position, straightening the leg fully.
6. Perform on the uninvolved leg first to establish range of motion expectations, then the injured leg.

COACHING CUES

- *Keep the movement symmetrical — compare range on both sides at each session.*
- *Your lower back should stay flat against the surface — do not arch.*
- *If knee pain prevents bending beyond 45°, work within that range and note the angle.*

PROGRESS WHEN

When you reach 90° of knee flexion pain-free for 3 consecutive sessions.

■ *Do not force range of motion. Work within pain-free limits only.*

04 Diaphragmatic Breathing with Brace

Core / Nervous
System
Regulation

SETS	REPS / DURATION	LOAD / RESISTANCE	TEMPO	REST
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1	10 breaths	Bodyweight	4 sec inhale / 6 sec exhale	N/A — continuous
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HOW TO PERFORM

1. Lie on your back with knees bent, feet flat. Place one hand on your chest and one on your belly.
2. Breathe in slowly through your nose for 4 counts — your belly should rise, not your chest.
3. At the top of the inhale, gently contract your deep abdominals — imagine drawing your navel toward your spine.
4. Breathe out slowly through pursed lips for 6 counts, maintaining the gentle abdominal contraction.
5. On the next inhale, maintain the light brace while allowing the belly to expand.
6. Repeat 10 cycles. This pattern activates deep stabilisers and downregulates pain signals.

COACHING CUES

- *The belly hand should move — the chest hand should stay relatively still.*
- *The brace should be a 20–30% contraction — like bracing for a light tap to the stomach, not a punch.*
- *This exercise reduces cortisol, decreases perceived pain, and improves sleep quality.*

PROGRESS WHEN

Practice this every day — there is no 'graduation' from breathing control.

05 Isometric Quad Set

Quadriceps Activation

SETS	REPS / DURATION	LOAD / RESISTANCE	TEMPO	REST
3	10 reps x 10 sec hold	Bodyweight	10 sec hold / 5 sec rest	60 sec between sets

HOW TO PERFORM

1. Lie on your back or sit with your injured leg extended straight.
2. Place a small rolled towel under the back of the knee to give it a slight bend (approx. 10–15°).
3. Tighten your thigh muscle by pressing the back of your knee down firmly into the towel.
4. Hold this contraction for 10 seconds — you should see and feel the quad muscle engage.
5. Relax fully for 5 seconds — confirm the muscle has completely let go before the next rep.
6. Do not hold your breath during the contraction — breathe steadily.

COACHING CUES

- *Press down, not out — the force should go straight through the knee into the towel.*
- *If you cannot feel the quad contracting, try tightening first on your uninjured side to find the sensation.*
- *Stronger contraction = better muscle fibre recruitment = slower atrophy.*

PROGRESS WHEN

When you can feel a strong, symmetric contraction compared to the uninvolved side.

■ *Avoid this exercise if it produces sharp knee pain — notify your clinician.*

06 Prone Knee Flexion (Gravity Only)

Hamstring /
Knee ROM

SETS	REPS / DURATION	LOAD / RESISTANCE	TEMPO	REST
2	10 reps	Gravity only	Slow lift / 2 sec hold / slow lower	45 sec

HOW TO PERFORM

1. Lie face down (prone) on a firm surface with both legs straight.
2. Slowly bend the injured leg at the knee, lifting the heel toward your buttocks using your hamstring muscle.
3. Allow gravity and your own muscle to do the work — do not use your hand to assist.
4. Lift only to the point of pain-free range — record the angle.
5. Hold at the top for 2 seconds.
6. Slowly lower back to the starting position.
7. Rest 5 seconds between reps — this is restoration, not conditioning.

COACHING CUES

- *Compare height of heel to ceiling between both legs — aim for symmetry over time.*
- *Your hips should stay flat — do not allow the pelvis to rotate to compensate for limited range.*
- *A mild pulling sensation through the thigh is acceptable. Pain is not.*

PROGRESS WHEN

When you achieve 90° of knee flexion without pain for 2 consecutive sessions.

PHASE 1 COMPLETION CRITERIA

You are ready for Phase 2 when all of the following are true:

- Resting pain is consistently 0–1 out of 10 for at least 3 consecutive days
- Pain during all Phase 1 exercises remains at or below 2 out of 10
- Visible swelling has reduced by at least 50% compared to initial presentation
- You can perform a full ankle pump range of motion without pain
- Isometric quad set produces a strong, visible contraction symmetrical to the uninjured side
- You have completed at least 7 full days of the Phase 1 programme

SESSION LOG

DAY	EXERCISES COMPLETED	PAIN SCORE	SWELLING (LOW/MED/HIGH)	NOTES
1		/10		
2		/10		
3		/10		
4		/10		
5		/10		
6		/10		
7		/10		
8		/10		
9		/10		
10		/10		
11		/10		
12		/10		
13		/10		
14		/10		