



## **Achilles Tendon Repair Rehabilitation Protocol**

### **Phase I: 0-2 Weeks Post-operative**

- Splint
  - Remain in Post-operative splint in a plantar flexed position
- Weight bearing
  - No weight bearing, Use crutches or Ankle scooter for ambulation,
- ROM
  - No ankle motion.
- Precautions:
  - Avoid long periods of dependent positioning of the foot during the first week to assist in wound healing

### **Phase II: 2-6 Weeks post-operative**

- Walking boot
  - Remain in walking boot with heel wedges in place at all times, except for hygiene
  - Including sleep
- Weight bearing
  - Normalize gait pattern in walking boot, with crutches for assistance
    - TTWB for weeks 2-3
    - WBAT for weeks 4-6
    - Based on pain, swelling and wound healing
  - Weight must go through your heel, do not push off your toe
- ROM
  - May come out of the boot 3-4 times a day for ankle motion
  - Begin in a plantar flexed position to neutral; 10 repetitions
- Showering
  - Based on wound healing.
  - Do not soak wound; no bath tub/hot tub etc.

### **Phase III: 6-8 Weeks Post-operative**

- Walking Boot Progression
  - Progression beginning during the 5<sup>th</sup>- 8th week based on surgeon direction
    - Decrease heel wedge height each week by 1 wedge
- Weight bearing
  - Full
- ROM
  - Active ankle AROM
- Exercises
  - Frontal and sagittal plane stepping drills (side step, cross-over step)
  - Begin Gentle gastroc/soleus stretching
  - Static balance exercises (begin in 2 foot stand, then 2 foot stand on balance board or narrow base of support and gradually progress to single leg stand)
  - Ankle strengthening with resistive tubing
  - Low velocity and partial ROM for functional movements (squat, step back, lunge)
  - Hip and core strengthening
  - Pool exercises if the wound is completely healed
- Precautions
  - Avoid over-stressing the repair
    - Avoid large movements in the sagittal plane, forceful plantarflexion while in a dorsiflexed position; aggressive passive ROM; and impact activities
- Progression Criteria
  - Normal gait mechanics without the boot
  - Squat to 30° knee flexion without weight shift
  - Single leg stand with good control for 10 seconds
  - Active ROM between 5° of dorsiflexion and 40° of plantarflexion

#### **Phase IV: 8-16 Weeks post-operative**

- Weight bearing
  - Normalize gait on all surfaces without boot or heel lift
- ROM
  - Active ROM between 15° of dorsiflexion and 50° of plantarflexion
- Exercises:
  - Continue with Phase III exercises
    - Good control and no pain with functional movements, including step up/down, squat and lunges
    - Balance progression
- Precautions
  - Avoid forceful impact activities
- Progression Criteria
  - Normal gait mechanics without the boot on all surfaces
  - Squat and lunge to 70° knee flexion without weight shift
  - Single leg stand with good control for 10 seconds
  - Active ROM between 15° of dorsiflexion and 50° of plantarflexion

**Phase V: 4 months post-operative**

- Exercises:
  - Good control and no pain with sport/work specific movements, including impact
- Precautions:
  - Post-activity soreness should resolve within 24 hours
  - Avoid post-activity swelling
  - Avoid running with a limp
- MD Clearance back to full activity