

Post-Surgical Rehabilitation Protocol for Achilles Tendon Rupture

Please use common sense and listen to your body. If something feels wrong or there is a significant increase in pain/discomfort at any point, contact Dr. Yi.

Time

Activity

For first 2 weeks after surgery

Non-weight bearing in splint at all times (**for 2 weeks**)

- Crutches, walkers, and knee scooters are popular options to help you get around
- Remember to elevate your ankle above the level of your heart to decrease swelling
- An ice pack behind the knee can also help (remember not to fall asleep with the ice pack on your skin as this can cause damage)

2 weeks after surgery

Partial weight bearing in boot with crutches

- You will be slowly working your way up to full weight bearing over the next 4 weeks (increase by 25% of your body weight each week with goal of weaning off of crutches by 6-week mark after surgery)
- **THREE wedges in boot**
- **Boot on at all times** except for hygiene and exercises
- Active dorsiflexion to neutral (3 times per day; 15-20 repetitions each time)
- Upper body and core work-outs
- Quad sets

6 weeks after surgery

Weight bearing as tolerated in boot without crutches (remove 1 wedge so there are 2 wedges remaining)

- Start easing off of crutches
- **Begin PT**
 - o Gentle active ROM
 - o Light band exercises
 - o Ease into single leg stances
 - o Hip and thigh strengthening
 - o Core strengthening
 - o Ease into stationary bike

8 weeks after surgery

Remove 1 wedge so there is 1 wedge remaining

10-12 weeks after surgery

Wean from boot into regular shoe

- **Remove final heel lift at 10 weeks (but ok to put 1 heel lift into regular shoe if there is an increase in pain with transition into shoe)**
- ROM / strengthening with PT
 - Start with DL heel raises
 - Progress to single leg heel raises

12 weeks after surgery

Advance PT with strength, power, endurance, plyometric exercise, sport specific training.
- Continue focusing on low impact activities (yoga, bicycle, swimming, elliptical)

4-6 months after surgery = the earliest you will start easing into high impact activities such as running and jumping

Big picture: it will take about 1 year to reach your new normal

Preventing Blood Clots

- Blood clots (formally known as “deep venous thrombosis”) can occur after injury, immobilization, and surgery. These blood clots can be dangerous especially if they travel to your lungs. Go to the emergency room or call the emergency line immediately if you have any symptoms such as calf swelling, calf pain, chest pain, shortness of breath.
- Fortunately, there are medications that effectively prevent blood clots
- You will take:

Controlling Pain After Surgery

- Unfortunately, you will have pain after surgery and there is no safe method to completely eliminate pain safely
- However, there are many strategies that can effectively decrease your pain level to a reasonable level:
 - Icing
 - Elevation of the leg (above the level of your chest)
 - Acetaminophen (“Tylenol”)
 - Oral anti-inflammatory medications (such as ibuprofen)
 - Narcotic pain medications (such as “oxycodone”)
- We will review and formulate a pain management plan specific to your situation (especially if you have allergies or adverse reactions to particular medications)
- Go to the emergency or call the emergency line immediately if you have pain that is significant and/or worsening despite taking medications