



ANKLE ARTHROSCOPY

POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS AND ACCELERATED REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

This protocol has been developed for the patient following ankle arthroscopy. Time to weight bearing may vary depending on the procedure performed as well as the surgical findings. In most cases weight bearing may begin 1 week following surgery, unless you have been given instructions otherwise.

For Patients at a glance:

- a. **Take 1 tablet (81 mg) of aspirin per day**, starting the day after surgery and continuing **for 2 weeks**. This is recommended to reduce the risk of blood clots.
- b. **Weight bearing:** After surgery you will be **non-weight bearing** on the operative leg and will use crutches for walking or a knee scooter for **one week**. After **one week you may begin partial weight bearing with crutches** until your first follow up appointment. After week 2, you may wean off the crutches as tolerated. **NOTE:** Depending on the operative findings/procedure you may be given specific instructions to delay weight bearing beyond one week.
- c. **Dressing/Splint:** You will be placed into a soft dressing or splint following surgery. Leave this on for 1 week. Wrap the dressing /splint for showers. Remove the dressing/splint after one week and begin using the CAM Boot.
- d. **Cam Boot:** Once the dressing/splint is removed in one week, wrap the ankle with an ace bandage to protect your skin and begin using the CAM boot. You can remove the CAM boot for therapy/exercises and showering. Sleep with the Boot on.
- e. **Elevation:** For the first 48-72 hours after surgery it is important to keep the ankle elevated at heart level or slightly above as much as possible. This is done not only to decrease swelling but also for pain control.
- f. **Showering:** It is ok to shower following surgery, but the dressing/splint must be wrapped in a plastic bag/cast cover or something similar. Once the splint is removed, the CAM boot may be removed for showering. Do not scrub or soak the incision until it is fully healed ~4 weeks after surgery.
- g. **Activity/Exercises:** While in the splint, immediately after surgery, work on bending and extending your toes which can help reduce swelling. It is ok to start light activity and ambulate with the crutches as your pain allows. For increasing pain rest and elevate your operative side. Once you transition to the CAM boot the Boot can be removed 3 times/day for gentle range of motion exercises of the ankle.
- h. **Pain medications:** Take the pain medications as prescribed. You can supplement your pain medications with over-the-counter Tylenol and ibuprofen as needed. Do not exceed recommended dosages listed on the bottle.
- i. If you had a **nerve block at the time of surgery, it usually wears off 24-36 hrs post-operatively**. It is normal to have some numbness in the foot the first several days after surgery as a result.
- j. **Return to driving:** To return to driving you need to be off of pain medications and cleared for full weight-bearing. In general, the criteria are that you feel comfortable enough to brake suddenly and/or make evasive maneuvers in a vehicle if that was required. It is your responsibility to wait to drive until you feel comfortable to do so.



I. Rehabilitation Protocol 0-1 Weeks Post-Op

- a. Non weight bearing to the operative side for 1 week from the date of surgery. Use crutches or a knee scooter following surgery
- b. **Goals:** 1) Healing and Protection 2) Swelling control (elevation) 3) Pain control
- c. Stretching: Hamstring/Quads/ITB/Hip Flexors
- d. Range of Motion (ROM)-flexion and extension of toes
- e. Active Range of Motion (AROM) of the hip and knee
- f. Straight leg raises and Quad Sets

II. 1-2 Weeks Post-Op

- a. CAM Walker
- b. Use crutches for **Partial Weight-Bearing** to the operative side
- c. The CAM walker is worn at all times, except for exercises/PT
- d. Continue previous exercises as appropriate
- e. Begin gentle Active Ankle ROM
- f. Isometric strengthening, SLR
- g. Modalities, edema control
- h. Ok for upper body exercises, but no push-ups or other exercises that require ankle loading

III. 2-6 Weeks Post-Op

- a. **CAM Walker for ambulation until post op week 6.** You may remove the CAM walker when you are non weight bearing or doing exercises/PT.
- b. **Weight bearing as tolerated in CAM Walker.** Wean off crutches as tolerated
- c. Progressive strengthening and range of motion
- d. Mini squats and Wall squats in CAM Walker
- e. Can begin stationary bike without resistance.
- f. Proprioceptive training at week 4
- g. Ok to start exercises in water once sutures removed
- h. **Goal: Neutral dorsiflexion (0 degrees) at 2 weeks**

IV. 6-12 Weeks Post-Op

- a. Wean out of CAM walker. Consider ankle brace
- b. **Goals:** walk without limp, full ROM
- d. Progress strengthening/proprioception
- e. Stationary bike with resistance
- f. Begin jogging
- g. **ROM Goal: 10 degrees dorsiflexion**

V. 3-6 Months Post-Op

- a. Return to weight training, focus on form, low weight high reps
- b. Full Running 3 months, Cutting pivoting sports 4-5 months