



## **Achilles Tendon Repair Post-Op Rehabilitation Protocol**

This protocol provides you with general guidelines for initial stage and progression of rehabilitation according to specified time frames, related tissue tolerance and directional preference of movement. Specific changes in the program will be made by the physician as appropriate for the individual patient.

REMEMBER: it can take up to a year to make a full recovery, and it is not unusual to have intermittent pains and aches during that time!

### **PHASE I: ( Weeks 1 - 2)**

#### **Goals**

- Rest and recovery from surgery
- Control swelling and pain
- Gradual increase of ALDs (activities of daily living)

#### **Guidelines**

- Will be in a short leg splint/cast or CAM boot. NWB (non weight bearing) when walking. Can put toes down when standing.
- Will use crutches or a knee scooter for at least 6 weeks.
- Education: surgery, anatomy, healing time, rehab phases
- Encourage ADL as much as possible
- Rest and elevation between ADL
- Hip AROM: lying and standing
- Knee AROM: lying and standing
- Sutures removed at 10-14 days

### **PHASE II: ( Weeks 3 - 6)**

#### **Goals**

- Maintain hip and knee ROM
- Improve core, hip and knee strength
- Safe use of crutches or knee scooter

#### **Guidelines**

- Partial WB in walker boot: in PF position- remove one wedge every 3 weeks
- Shower when wound clear



- Massage of foot to decrease edema (light massage start from toes and work towards ankle)
- Control swelling with elevation
- Core exercises:
  - Abdominal recruitment
  - Bridging on ball with feet lightly against wall
  - Ball reach
  - Arm pulleys or resisted theraband diagonals
- Toe flexion/extension
- Hip: AROM
  - Strength: clams, side lifts, gluteus maximus, SLR
- Knee: AROM
  - Strength: SLR, side lifts, prone leg lifts
  - Theraband press-progress to leg press machine at 21 days
- Stretching: glut max, glut med, pirformis, hamstring gentle, rectus femoris
- Upper extremity exercises: progress as tolerated

### **PHASE III: ( Weeks 7 - 10)**

#### **Goals**

- FWB in walker boot, may transition to shoe while using heel lift (when comfortable).
- Increase core, hip, and knee strength

#### **Guidelines**

- Swelling Control with elevation and modalities as required
- AROM at ankle: PF (plantar flexion), inversion/eversion, DF (dorsiflexion) to first point of resistance
- Manual mobilization of foot as required
- Gentle mobilization subtalar
- Continue core, hip and knee strengthening (do exercises with brace on)
- Try to control knee hyper-extension (knee hyper-extends to compensate for lack of DF at ankle)

### **PHASE IV: ( Weeks 10 - 12)**

#### **Goals**

- Increase DF



### **Guidelines**

- Stationary bicycle: start to add tension
- Sitting: active PF exercises, DF to tolerance

### **Phase V: ( Weeks 13 - 16)**

#### **Goals**

- FWB, may take lift out of shoe when comfortable/no swelling or pain
- Near 75% strength
- Good proprioception in single leg support

### **Guidelines**

- Increase WB tolerance
- Theraband: inversion/eversion, DF
- ROM exercises:
  - Gentle Calf stretches
  - Manual mobilization as required
- Calf press
- Leg press
- Proprioceptive exercises
  - Single leg support
  - Progress to wobble board, sissel, fitter
- Gait retraining
- Swimming
- Stepper
- Eccentric drops
- Progress to advance dynamic drills 16+ weeks
  - Hopping
  - Skipping
  - Progress to sport specific drills 16 + weeks

### **Phase VI: (Weeks 16+)**

#### **Goals**

- Full lower extremity strength
- Maximum function



### **Guidelines**

- Work or sport specific activity
- Work to control arch
- Emphasis on
  - Proprioception: wobble board
  - Strength training through range
    - Running

### **Phase VII: (Week 26)**

- Return to competitive sport  
**Note: Risk of re-rupture if jumping down from a height**