



After Surgical Repair of Achilles Tendon Rupture

Rehabilitation Protocol

- ❖ Well-padded 20-degrees equinus posterior splint with plaster ankle stirrup initially post-operative
- ❖ Non weight-bearing with crutches for 4 weeks
- ❖ Progress to partial weight-bearing with crutch assisted ambulation in a short-leg fiberglass cast

For High-Level Compliant Athletes

- ❖ Initially use cam boot with 15-20 degrees of equinus (plantar flexion) dialed in, using a heel lift and ankle angle boot setting of 20 degrees of plantar flexion
- ❖ Active non weight-bearing ROM exercises can be started as early as 7 days after surgery. Incision must be well healed before initiation of exercises
- ❖ Initial exercise consists of very gentle passive plantar flexion and active dorsiflexion limited to 20 degrees, two sets of five, three times a day
- ❖ At 1 month, start to slowly bring ankle toward neutral by decreasing the heel lift in the boot by 1 cm. Wean out of heel lift over 6-8 period
- ❖ Use walking boot for 6-8 weeks, then make the transition to normal shoes when using the smaller heel lifts.
- ❖ Stationary bicycling (no resistance) and swimming initiated at 6 weeks
- ❖ Gradual return to competition as in conservative treatment. Must have full strength (versus nonoperative side) and full endurance and have completed the running program

For Lower-Demand Athletes

- ❖ Use a short-leg non weight-bearing gravity equinus cast for 6-8 weeks followed by 1 cm heel lift in a removable boot for 1 month
- ❖ Progressive non weight-bearing resistance exercises are started at 8-10 weeks
- ❖ Stationary bicycling and swimming at approximately 8 weeks
- ❖ Return to some athletic activity (light running) at 5-6 months if strength is 70% of uninvolved leg

Generally, return to full level takes 1 year, can take up to 18 months