

Ankle Arthrodesis (Fusion): Postoperative Protocols

WEEK 0 - 2:

- Your leg will be in a non-removable plaster splint.
- Keep your foot elevated above the level of your heart
- Keep your splint dry
- STRICT NON WEIGHT BEARING
- Leg lifts in bed: You may hear and feel a "clicking" in the outside of your ankle when you do leg lifts - this is normal

WEEK 2-6:

- First postoperative visit to check your surgical incision and take out your stitches
- If wound has healed you will be placed in a removable boot
- Scar massage
- Swelling control (compression stocking)
- Can have foot flat on the ground when standing but no walking on foot
- Keep boot on AT ALL TIMES except for showers and to move your big toe in a circle 5 times/day

WEEK 6-10:

Second postoperative visit to repeat x-rays and advance your weight bearing. **IF X-RAYS ARE OK** I will allow you to start the progressive weight bearing protocol.

- 25% body weight x 1 week
 - 50% body weight x 1 week
 - 75% body weight x 1 week
 - 100% body weight x 1week
- Wear boot for weight bearing only, can discontinue at night and when at rest
- Swimming and stationary bike
- Continue with compression stocking

WEEK 10-14:

- Start weaning out of boot - practice standing, weight shifting and small periods of walking without the boot, gradually increase time and distance to be completely out of boot by 10-12 weeks
- Gait retraining
- Proprioceptive training (balance)
- Continue with compression stocking

WEEK 14-16

- Third postoperative visit to repeat x-rays and make sure you are progressing with rehab
- Bilateral heel raises progressing to unilateral heel raises
- Continue with compression stocking

WEEK 16+

- Return to normal activities

6 MONTHS POST OP

Last visit with x-rays to make sure everything is going well prior to discharge from the office
I am glad to see you anything thereafter if you are having problems

PAIN AND SWELLING:

This procedure can cause a lot of swelling. It is normal for the foot and ankle to be swollen for up to 6-12 months after surgery. A compression stocking worn during the day can be quite helpful.

NUMBNESS:

It is normal to have some numbness around your incisions. This can take 6-12 months to resolve completely

DRIVING:

You may drive if surgery is on the LEFT when you are off narcotics and if your car is an automatic. If surgery is on the RIGHT you can drive when you are full weight bearing without aids. **YOU CANNOT DRIVE WHILE YOUR FOOT IS IN A WALKING BOOT.**

RETURN TO WORK:

NO EARLIER THAN 3-4 WEEKS for a desk job, 4-6 months for a job that requires significant standing

*** Please note if you have had other procedures in addition to your ankle fusion there may be alterations to this protocol