

Achilles Tendon Repair: Postoperative Protocol

Patient NWB (non-weight bearing) for 2 weeks unless otherwise indicated.
Use heel lift for 6 weeks once bearing weight.
PT begins at 8 weeks post-op unless otherwise indicated.

Phase I

- Gait training (wean from heel lift after 6 weeks if applicable)
- Soft tissue massage and/or modalities as needed

Exercises:

- Towel calf stretch (without pain)
- Theraband exercises – dorsi and planterflexion, inversion, eversion
- Sitting calf raises
- Straight leg raises
- Bike light if ROM allows
- May perform pool exercises
- Patient may do this mainly as an independent program if appropriate

Progress to Phase II when:

- Tolerates all Phase I without pain or significant increase in swelling
- Ambulates FWB without device
- ROM for plantarflexion, inversion and eversion are normal
- Dorsiflexion is at approximately neutral

Phase II (10-12 weeks post-op)

- Gait training
- Soft tissue work and/or modalities as needed

Exercises:

- Standing gastroc and soleus stretches.
- Bike light to moderate resistance as tolerated
- Leg press: quads bilateral to unilateral, calf raises (sub-maximal bilateral to unilateral)
 - Sitting calf raises at generally 10-12 weeks
 - Step ups/Step downs.
 - Unilateral stance; balance activities with challenges if appropriate (ground clock)
 - Mini-squats – bilateral to unilateral
 - Stairmaster – short steps 4", no greater than level 4 if no pain or inflammation
 - May continue pool if appropriate
 - May be 2X/wk or to independent as appropriate

Progress to Phase III when:

- Can do each of Phase II activities without pain or swelling
- ROM equal bilaterally
- Able to do bilateral calf raise without difficulty and weight equal bilaterally
- Unilateral stance balance equal bilaterally

Phase III (*Generally not before 12 weeks*)

Frequency at discretion of therapist.

- Gait normal without device.
- Standing calf raises to unilateral at generally 16 weeks
- Outdoor biking.
- Full/maximal one leg PRE's [progressive resistance exercises] (at 16 weeks)
- Agility drills (generally not before 16-20 weeks.)
- Jogging to running when pain-free
- Sport-specific; cutting, side shuffles, jumping, hopping