



Achilles Tendon Repair Rehabilitation Protocol

The following is a protocol for post-operative patients following Achilles tendon repair. The primary goal of this protocol is to protect the repair while steadily progressing towards and ultimately achieving pre-injury level of activity. Progression should be individualized based upon each patient's specific needs, pain level, physical examination, functional progress, and presence of any complications.

Post-op Days 1 – 10

- L&U Splint – Watch for skin breakdown
- Crutches – non-weightbearing (NWB)
- Active motion (AROM) hip and knee
- Wiggle toes
- Straight leg raise (SLR) x4
- Lower extremity (LE) stretches – Hamstring, quads, ITB, hip flexors
- Ice and elevation

Goals

- Pain management
- Protection

Days 10 – 21

- D/c Splint and remove sutures (Ortho)
- Cam walker with ½ inch heel lift
- Crutches – Partial weightbearing (PWB)
- Continue appropriate previous exercises
- Isometrics x3 **No Plantar Flexion** (PF)
- Gentle **active DF, INV, EV**
- **Passive PF** to tolerance – sit with leg in dependent position
- SLR x4 with weight mid calf
- Short arc quat (SAQ)
- Upper body exercises (seated or bend only – no pushups)
- Ice as needed

Goal - Minimize quad atrophy

Weeks 3 – 4

- Cam walker with _____ heel lift
- Crutches – weightbearing as tolerated (WBAT)
- Continue appropriate previous exercises
- Scar massage/mobilization with oil/cream
- Weight shifts

Goal - No adhesions

Weeks 4 - 6

- Cam walker with no lift
- Crutches – Full weight bearing (FWB), D/c when gait is WNL
- Continue appropriate previous exercises
- Isometrics x 4
- Towel crunches and side-to-side
- Steamboats (Theraband x4 while standing on involved LE) in cam walker
- Mini-squats, wall squats, Total gym in cam walker
- Stationary bike in cam walker with the heel on the pedal

Goal - Neutral DF (0 degrees)

Weeks 6 - 8

- Taper out of cam walker at home, but wear outside of home
- Continue appropriate previous exercises
- Ankle AROM including plantar flexion – calf pumping, alphabet, rotations
- Light Theraband x3 – **No plantar flexion**
- Seated BAPS
- Stationary bike in cam walker with toes on the pedal
- Pool therapy – Aqua-jogger in deep water

Goals

- 10 degrees DF
- Normal gait

Weeks 8 - 12

- Transition from cam walker to ankle brace
- Continue appropriate previous exercises
- Theraband ex x4 – Gradually increase resistance
- Elgin
- Double leg heel raises
- Leg press, knee ext, hamstring curl, hip weight machines
- Forward, retro and lateral step downs
- Proprioception ex
 - Double leg BAPS
 - Progress to single leg BAPS, ball toss, body blade
- Pushup progression
- Pool therapy – Chest (waist) deep
- Treadmill – walking progression program
- Elliptical trainer

Goals

- Symmetrical DF
- Walk 2 miles at 15 min/mile pace

Months 3 – 4

- D/c brace
- Continue appropriate previous exercises
- Single leg heel raises
- Functional activities – Fitter, slide board, figures 8's, gentle loops, large zigzags
- Treadmill – Running progression program
- Stairmaster

Goals

- No calf atrophy
- Run 2 miles at easy pace

Months 4 – 6

- Continue appropriate previous exercises
- Running progression program – Progress to track and hard surfaces
- Agility drills / Plyometrics
- Transition to home / gym program

Goal

- Return to all activities.

Return to Activities:

Return to full activities on average 4-6 months per Dr. Collard and approved by physical therapist.

