

Achilles Tendon Repair Surgery

Post-operative Instructions

Phase One: The First Week After Surgery

Amon T. Ferry, MD

Orthopedic Surgery / Sports Medicine
9250 N 3rd St., Suite 2030, Phoenix, AZ 85020
Tel: 623-882-8184 Fax:623-882-8184

After anesthesia has been given, your leg will be cleaned and sterile drapes will be placed. A small incision will be made over the Achilles tendon. The ruptured tendon is identified and exposed. The ruptured ends of the tendon are brought together with sutures to achieve a secure repair. Sometimes a small tendon in the leg is also used to reinforce the Achilles tendon repair. The skin is closed with sutures and the foot is immobilized in a soft splint.

AFTER SURGERY

You will be given a prescription for pain medication to take home with you. The pain medication has a tendency to make you constipated and occasionally can cause nausea. In addition to this medication you should take one aspirin a day to help prevent blood clots (phlebitis).

CAST/CRUTCHES

You will go home with a splint on your leg and foot. **As much as possible, keep your foot elevated higher than your heart** and move the toes up and down often to help control swelling. Use the crutches when you walk, but **do not bear weight on your operated leg**.

OFFICE VISIT

Please make an appointment to see Dr. Ferry in the office 10-14 days after surgery. At that time your splint and sutures will be removed and you will be placed into a cast. Dr. Ferry will give you further instructions at that time.

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Phase 2: Weeks 4 through 8 After Surgery

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Goals

1. Protect the repaired tendon
2. Decrease swelling
3. Start early gentle range of motion exercises
4. Begin weight bearing with the cast-boot when walking

ACTIVITIES

1. Achilles Boot (brace)

You will be fitted with a removable ankle brace that has rubber wedges under the heel to elevate your heel. This keeps your foot in a toe-down position. **You can bear full weight on the operated leg as long as you are wearing the brace and feel pressure on your heel when you walk.** Your weight should be borne through the heel and not the toes. You can remove the brace to shower or bathe and to move the foot and ankle.

2. Crutches

You can discontinue using the crutches over the next one to two weeks. Progress from using two crutches to using one crutch on the side opposite your surgery. If you feel comfortable doing so, you can progress to walking with only the support of the brace if you are pain free and you are bearing weight through your heel.

3. Swelling

As often as you can, elevate your leg higher than your heart to control swelling in your foot and leg. If the foot and toes are swollen, you must elevate for longer periods of time. Use elastic stockings to lessen leg swelling.

4. Exercises

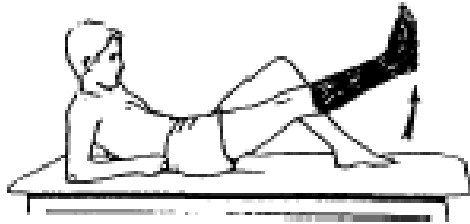
You may do exercises for your upper body and uninvolved leg. Exercises can be done for the operated leg as directed in the following section. When doing the ankle motion exercises with the brace removed, move the ankle and foot gently to avoid excessive stress at the surgery site. Gentle motion can promote healing, but aggressive motion can disrupt the surgical repair.

Exercise Program

Ankle flexion-extension - Remove the brace.
Gently move the foot in an up and down motion. Do not try to force motion through pain, but move the foot up and down through the range of motion that is pain free. Repeat 20 times, three times a day.

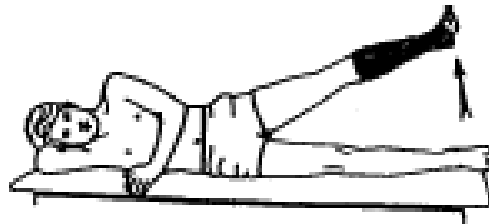


Ankle circles - Remove the brace.
Move the foot so that you are making a circular motion. Make 10 circles to the left and 10 circles to the right, three times a day.



Straight leg lift - With the brace on, tighten the quadriceps muscles so that the knee is flat, straight and fully extended. Try to raise the entire leg up off the floor or bed. If you are able to do so keeping the knee straight, raise the leg to about 45 degrees, pause one second and then lower slowly. Repeat 20 times, twice a day.

Hip Abduction - With the brace on, lie on your unoperated side. Keeping the knee fully extended, raise the operated limb upward to a 45 degree angle as illustrated. Hold one second, then lower slowly. Repeat 20 times, twice a day



Standing Hamstring curl - With the brace on, stand facing a table which you will use for balance and support. While standing on the unoperated leg bend the knee of the operated side and raise the heel toward the buttock. Hold this flexed position for one second. Slowly lower the foot back to the floor. Keep the thighs aligned as illustrated. Repeat 20 times.



Stationary Cycle - With the brace on, you may ride a stationary bicycle for 10 to 20 minutes a day if you wish.

Office Visit

Please make an appointment to see Dr. Ferry eight weeks after surgery.

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Phase Three: Weeks 8 through 12 After Surgery

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Goals

1. Protect the repaired tendon
2. Decrease swelling
3. Start strengthening exercises
4. Continue full weight bearing using the brace when walking

ACTIVITIES

1. Achilles boot (brace)

Continue to wear the brace, but the heel lift that keeps your foot in a toe-down position can be lowered. You can bear full weight on the operated leg as long as you are wearing the brace. You should feel that your weight is being borne through the heel and not the toes. You can remove the cast-boot to shower or bathe and to practice range of motion exercises.

2. Swelling

If the leg is swollen, continue to elevate your leg higher than your heart. Use elastic stockings to lessen swelling

3. Exercises

You may do exercises for your upper body and uninvolved leg. Continue to do the exercises outlined in earlier phases on a daily basis. All exercises should be done without pain or excessive stretch at the surgery site. The following Theraband exercises can be added, once a day, as instructed by Dr. Ferry or the physical therapist.

Theraband Exercise Program

(start using yellow theraband and progress to red in 2 weeks)

Ankle Eversion

With tubing anchored around uninvolved foot, slowly turn injured foot outward. Repeat 30 times.

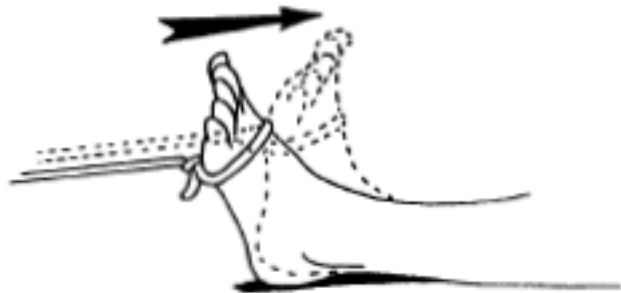


Ankle Plantar Flexion

With tubing around foot, press foot down. Repeat 30 times. This is the most important of the exercises.

Ankle Dorsiflexion

With tubing anchored on solid object, pull foot toward you knee. Repeat 30 times.



Ankle Inversion

Cross legs with the operated foot underneath. With tubing anchored around uninvolved foot, slowly turn injured foot inward. Repeat 30 times.



Office Visit

Please make an appointment to see Dr. Ferry in 6 weeks (about 3 months after surgery).

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Phase Four: Weeks 12 through 24 After Surgery

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Goals

1. Protect the repaired tendon
2. Add strengthening exercises
3. Use a heel lift when walking
4. Begin walking normally

ACTIVITIES

1. Discontinue Achilles Boot (brace)

Insert one of the rubber wedges from inside the brace into your shoe to elevate the heel. After using the heel lift in your shoe for approximately one month, you may remove the lift from your shoe if you are walking normally (without a limp).

2. Exercises

You may do exercises for your upper body and uninvolved leg. The theraband exercises should be done every other day. You can progress to red theraband for one month, then progress to blue theraband after that. The exercises from Phase One can be done every other day and ankle weights can be added to increase resistance. The following exercises can be added, every other day, as instructed by Dr. Ferry or the physical therapist.

Calf Stretch

Keeping the rear (injured) leg straight, with the heel and foot flat on the floor, lean into wall until a stretch is felt in the calf. Do not stretch excessively. Hold 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat 3 to 5 times.



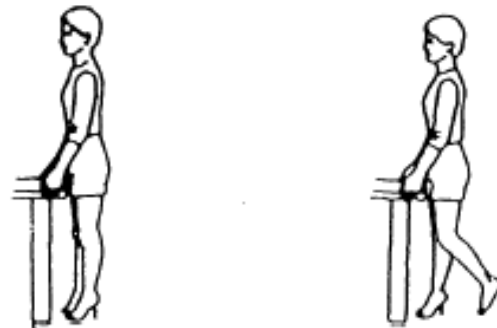
Dorsiflexion Stretch

Standing with both knees bent and the injured foot forward, gently lean forward, bending the injured knee over the ankle while keeping the heel and foot flat on the floor. This stretch will be felt in the ankle close to the heel or in the front of the ankle. Do not over-stretch! Hold 15 to 20 seconds, Repeat 3 to 5 times.



Toe Raises

Stand facing a table, holding the table for support and balance. Keep the knees extended straight. While holding the knees fully straight, raise up on 'tip-toes' while maintaining the knees in full extension. Hold for one second, then lower slowly to the starting position. Repeat 20 to 30 times. After one month, you can raise up on both legs, and lower down on only the operated side. At five or six months after surgery, build strength so that you can raise up and down on just the injured leg.



Single-Leg Balancing

Attempt to balance on the operated leg while holding the unoperated foot in the air. When you can balance easily, you can attempt to balance with eyes closed, or while someone throws you a ball. Practice this exercise for 5 minutes.



Office Visit

Please make an appointment to see Dr. Ferry in 3 months (6 months after surgery).