

ANKLE FUSION PROTOCOL

POST-OP WEEK 0-6:

Home Expectations:

1. Follow weight bearing schedule to ensure healing and minimize inflammation
2. Pain management:
 - a. Cryotherapy: Apply to surgical site to decrease post op edema and help with pain reduction. Use as often as needed.
 - b. Prescription pain medications as needed. Wean off after 4 weeks and start Acetaminophen and/or NSAIDS as needed.
 - c. Elevation of surgical site above the level of your heart.
3. Follow up with the Orthopedic Team (Physician Assistant) at 2 weeks post op.

Therapy Goals: (Begin formal PT at 6 weeks if needed)

1. Weight bearing: nonweightbearing in cast or boot

POST-OP WEEK 6-12:

Home Expectations:

1. Come out of cast, transition to boot if sufficiently healed
2. Follow up with your Orthopedic Surgeon at 6 weeks post op.

Therapy Goals (if needed):

1. Weight bearing: partial weight bearing—progress to full weight bearing in boot based on healing and Orthopedic provider's/PT's instruction
 - a. Starting with 25% weight bearing and increasing 25% every 1-2 weeks until fully weightbearing in boot
2. AROM/PROM to non-fused joints:
 - a. Subtalar arthrodesis: all planes; mid and forefoot
 - b. Triple arthrodesis: dorsiflexion and plantarflexion only
3. Isometric all planes allowed and early isotonic ankle planes mentioned above according to procedure
4. Strengthening:
 - a. Foot intrinsic strengthening
 - b. Progressive hip, ankle, and core strengthening
 - c. Ankle strengthening: start isometric and work up to gentle isotonic
5. Wound care:
 - a. Scar care to start at 6 weeks post op: Start cross friction and circular motion massage of incision with Vitamin E or Scar oil, 2-3 minutes 3-4 times daily once the scar is healed to prevent scarring and to prevent tenderness.
6. Stationary bike in boot starting at 6 weeks

7. Proprioception: may begin with seated BAPS board and progress to standing balance assisted exercises as tolerated

POST-OP WEEKS 12-14:

Home Expectations:

1. Transition to a regular shoe, once able to fully weight bear in boot. Start using a shoe inside the house and advance to outside activities gradually

Therapy Goals:

1. Low level balance exercises
2. Gait training
3. Progressive hip, knee, and ankle strengthening

POST-OP WEEKS 14-16:

Home Expectations:

1. Ambulation without brace and no compensation

Therapy Goals:

1. PROM/AROM: LE flexibility restored
2. Strengthening: continue with progressing LE and core strength to tolerance
3. Proprioception: continue progression
 - a. Stable surface decreasing UE support and progression to single leg balance
 - b. Progression to unstable surfaces, perturbations, and/or dual tasking

This protocol provides you with general guidelines for the rehabilitation of an Ankle Fusion. Changes in the program are made as appropriate/indicated for each patient. Any further restrictions on the physician's order take precedence. If you have any questions regarding the patient and/or protocol, please send a message to the Little Falls Orthopedics Team or Physical Therapy Department at (320) 631-2205.