

Post-Surgical Protocol for Ankle Fractures

Please use common sense and listen to your body. If something feels wrong or there is a significant increase in pain/discomfort at any point, contact Dr. Yi.

Time

First 2 weeks after surgery

~2 weeks after surgery

Activity

Non-weight bearing in splint at all times (**for 2 weeks**)

- Crutches, walkers, and knee scooters are popular options to help you get around
- Remember to elevate your ankle above the level of your heart to decrease swelling
- An ice pack behind the knee can also help (remember not to fall asleep with the ice pack on your skin as this can cause damage)

Continue non-weight bearing for 4 additional weeks (total of 6 weeks after surgery)

- You will see Dr. Yi for your first postoperative visit (2 weeks after surgery)
- Your splint will be removed
- **If the incisions have healed enough, your sutures will be removed**
- It is ok to start showering and getting the incision sites wet, but please gently pat the incision down dry (do not rub the incision site as your incisions are continuing to heal)
- Do not soak the incisions for another 2 weeks
- **You will transition into a walking boot (you may remove the boot when resting, for hygiene, and for some gentle exercises; otherwise keep boot on)**
- You will start **gentle motion exercises that Dr. Yi will show you at your 2-week post-surgery clinic visit.**

6 weeks after surgery

Start partial progressive weight bearing

- In the boot, you will **start progressively putting more weight down** on your injured leg
- You will **wean off of crutches over the course of the next few weeks** (you will listen to your body and use **pain as your guide – as a rule of thumb: stop/slow down if it causes pain!**)
- You **do not need to sleep in the boot** and you can **remove the boot when you are resting (not weight bearing)**
- Once you are out of the boot, you will transition into a **lace-up ankle brace** (for a few weeks)
- You will start **physical therapy**
 - o ROM
 - o Strengthening
 - o Proprioception/balance
 - o Kinetic chain and core strengthening
 - o Gait training
 - o Modalities as indicated
- Ok to start **low impact activity** (cycling, yoga, walks)
- **No high impact activity yet** (running, jumping)

10 weeks after surgery

Start easing into impact activity

- Again, stop/slow down if there is an increase in pain with particular activities!
- The healing process is still ongoing and there is still improvement to occur
- It will still take several weeks before you are more confident engaging in higher level/impact activity
- Lace-up ankle brace is not mandatory at this point, but can be helpful the first few times you engage in specific higher-level activities (given that you have not performed these activities in a long time)

Preventing Blood Clots

- Blood clots (formally known as “deep venous thrombosis”) can occur after injury, immobilization, and surgery. These blood clots can be dangerous especially if they travel to your lungs. Go to the emergency room or call the emergency line immediately if you have any symptoms such as calf swelling, calf pain, chest pain, shortness of breath.
- Fortunately, there are medications that effectively prevent blood clots
- You will take:

Controlling Pain After Surgery

- Unfortunately, you will have pain after surgery and there is no safe method to completely eliminate pain safely
- However, there are many strategies that can effectively decrease your pain level to a reasonable level:
 - Icing
 - Elevation of the leg (above the level of your chest)
 - Acetaminophen (“Tylenol”)
 - Oral anti-inflammatory medications (such as ibuprofen)
 - Narcotic pain medications (such as “oxycodone”)
- We will review and formulate a pain management plan specific to your situation (especially if you have allergies or adverse reactions to particular medications)
- Go to the emergency or call the emergency line immediately if you have pain that is significant and/or worsening despite taking medications