

Ankle Fracture ORIF Rehabilitation Protocol

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PHASE I (Week 0-6) – Maximum Protection

- **Non-weight bearing** x 6 weeks
- Alleviate acute pain and swelling
- Crutch Training
- Multi-plane hip, quad, hamstring, core and upper extremity strengthening permitted
- Toe curls and spreads

PHASE II (Weeks 6-8) – Range of Motion and Early Strengthening

Goals:

- Decrease swelling
- Increase ROM
- Increase strength hip/knee
- Improve general conditioning

Plan:

- Transition from crutches to WBAT in boot without assist
- Continue core, hip strengthening and non-impact cardiovascular training
- ROM
 - Strong emphasis on restoring **full dorsiflexion**
- Isometric and early isotonic ankle
- Foot intrinsic strengthening
- Bilateral progression to unilateral squat, step and matrix progression
- Proprioceptive and balance training
- Joint mobilizations and soft tissue treatments for swelling, mobility, healing

PHASE III (Weeks 8-12) – Progressive Strengthening

Goals:

- Full, painless ROM
- Progress Strengthening
- Continue general conditioning

Plan:

- Full symmetric ROM

- Normal gait
- Advance ankle and foot intrinsic strengthening, avoid impact and cutting until week 12
- Pool running, progressing to dry land
- Linear progressing to lateral and rotational functional movements
- Bilateral progressing to unilateral plyometric activity
- Continue with mobilizations
- Proprioception

PHASE IV (Weeks 12-16) – Advanced Strengthening

Goals:

- Return to Sport/full activities

Plan:

- Advance impact, proprioception and functional training
- Sport-specific drills on field or court with functional brace (**to be worn first year of competition**)
- Sport test at 3-4 months based on progress

Some suggested therapeutic exercises for closer to the end of rehab protocol *if age and sport-appropriate* once patient judged ready and safe by physical therapist:

- Low amplitude low velocity agility drills: forward and backward skipping, side shuffle, skater's quick stepping, carioca, cross overs, backward jog, forward jog
- Closed chain strengthening for quadriceps and glutes - progressing from double leg strengthening to single leg strengthening: lunge progressions and single leg squat progressions
- Single leg balance exercises and progressions, progressing from stationary to deceleration in to holding posture and position
- At approximately 12-14 weeks initiate low amplitude landing mechanics: med ball squat catches, shallow jump landings, chop and drop stops, etc
- Hip strengthening - especially oriented at neuromuscular control in prevention of hip adduction at landing and stance
- Core strength and stabilization - especially orientated at preventing frontal plane trunk lean during landing and single leg stances
- Unanticipated movement control drills, including cutting and pivoting
- Agility ladder drills
- Stretching for patient specific muscle imbalances