

ACHILLES TENDON REPAIR Rehabilitation Protocol

General Considerations:

- Timeframes mentioned in this protocol should be considered approximate with actual progression based on clinical presentation and physician direction.
- Patient usually nonweightbearing for 3-4 weeks.
- Physical therapy usually begins 4 weeks postop.
- Monitor the incision scar and tendon scar for mobility, implement regular soft tissue mobilization to avoid fibrosis.
- No running, jumping, or ballistic movements for 6 months.
- Remove heel prop between 4-6 weeks.
- Discontinue boot at 6-8 weeks.
- No U-heel raise for 12 weeks.

Phase I (4-6 weeks):

- Gait training with patient in bivalve cast or walking boot progress from nonweightbearing to partial weightbearing, and finally to full weightbearing.
- Soft tissue mobilization for scar tissue and modalities as indicated.

Exercises:

AROM
Thera-Band exercises
Calf stretch (seated, pain-free)
Seated calf raises
Straight leg raises
Seated BAPS
Well-leg stationary bike
Aquatic exercise including deep-well exercises

Progress to Phase II when:

Physician indicates
Ambulating full weightbearing without assistive device
Plantarflexion, inversion, and eversion ROM equal bilaterally
Dorsiflexion ROM is neutral

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Phase II (6-12) weeks:

- Gait training, if in bivalve cast, discharge at 6 weeks and progress to shoe with heel lift; if in walking boot, discharge at 8 weeks and progress to regular shoe.
- Soft tissue mobilization for scar tissue

Exercises:

Standing gastrocnemius and soleus stretch
Stationary bike (heel push only until 8 weeks)
Standing calf raises (approximately 8 weeks)
Mini-squats (bilateral to unilateral)
Closed chain step exercises (step-ups progress to step-downs)
Proprioceptive training (single-leg balance challenged as able)
Leg press (bilateral to unilateral)

Progress to Phase III when:

Physician indicates
Dorsiflexion ROM equal bilaterally
Unilateral stance equal bilaterally
Gait normalized

Phase III (12 weeks – discharge):

- One-leg PREs (as tolerated).
- Lunges (multidirectional and walking).
- Unilateral calf raises (approximately 16 weeks).
- Outdoor biking.
- Jogging (approximately 16-20 weeks, cleared by MD).
- Agility drills (approximately 16-20 weeks, cleared by MD),

Discharge criteria:

Physician indicates
Long-term goals achieved
Patient personal goals achieved