

## Achilles Tendon Repair Rehab Protocol

### Phase 1 (0-4 Weeks)

#### **Goals:**

- Protect the tendon repair
- Control pain and swelling

#### **Weightbearing:**

- Non-weightbearing or toe touch weightbearing

#### **Splinting**

- Stay in splint at all times for 0-2 weeks
- Cast or walker boot with 1 inch heel lift 2-4 weeks. Walking boot should be worn at all times except for bathing and exercises.

#### **Physical Therapy/Exercises**

- No physical therapy or ankle range of motion (ROM) for 0-2 weeks

At 2 weeks may begin:

- Active dorsiflexion (DF) to neutral only and with knee flex, no active plantarflexion
- Hip and knee strengthening WITH BRACE ON: straight leg raises, hip abduction leg raises
- Joint mobilization – NO passive heel cord stretching
- Stationary bicycle with brace on

### Phase 2 (4-8 weeks)

#### **Goals:**

- Protect the tendon repair
- Regain ankle range of motion

#### **Weightbearing/Splinting**

- 4-6 weeks: partial weightbearing with 1 in heel lift in boot
- 6-8 weeks: progress to full weightbearing with ½ inch heel lift in boot

#### **Physical Therapy/Exercises**

- Ankle eversion/inversion ROM; ankle passive plantarflexion ROM
- Increase active ankle dorsiflexion until gentle stretch of Achilles
- Continue hip and knee strengthening with brace on

### **Phase 3 (8-12 Weeks)**

#### **Goals:**

- Achieve full ankle ROM
- Begin light ankle stretching

#### **Weightbearing/Splinting**

- Weightbearing as tolerated in walker boot with ¼ inch heel lift

#### **Physical Therapy/Exercises**

- Full ankle passive and active ROM in plantar/dorsiflexion; no forceful stretching of heel cord
- Begin light resistive strengthening in plantar/dorsiflexion with knee flexed (therabands)
- Inversion/eversion isometrics
- Continue hip and knee strengthening

### **Phase 4 (3-6 Months)**

#### **Goals:**

- Ankle strengthening
- Regain normal gait

#### **Weightbearing:**

- In normal shoes with ¼ inch heel lift. Use heel lift for 1 month

#### **Physical Therapy/Exercises**

- Increase resistive plantar/dorsiflexion exercises
- Calf and dorsiflexion stretch leaning against wall (avoid if excessive calf stretch) controlled slow eccentric exercises
- Closed chain exercises: controlled squats and lunges; bilateral calf/toe raises, progressing to single leg raises
- Single leg balancing
- Treadmill/track walking; progress to light jogging at 5 months if no symptoms

### **Phase 5 (5-9 Months)**

#### **Goals:**

- Continue strengthening
- Sport/Job specific training & exercises
- Progress strengthening, proprioceptive and balance training
- Jogging/running, jumping, and eccentric exercises