

ANKLE FRACTURE REHABILITATION

The first week to 10 days after surgery consists only of rest, and elevation while the skin and wound heal. The patient will gently flex and extend their toes in the splint.

In stable injuries, a CAM Boot can be used and removed for Phase 1 rehabilitation exercises and showering. No soaking until the wound is completely healed.

PHASE 1: WEEKS 2-6

- **Ankle Pumps:** Point toes, then pull back toward you 15 times, repeat 3 sets.
- **Towel Gather:** Spread out a small towel on floor. Pull toward you with toes until towel is fully gathered around foot. Repeat 10-15 times.
- **Ball Pick-up:** Grasp marble size ball between 1st and 2nd toes; pick up and transfer to opposite pile. Repeat 15 times.
- **Gentle Towel Stretches (start at 3-4 weeks):** Sit on a hard surface with your injured leg stretched out in front of you. Do 10 sets of these
 - Loop towel around foot and pull back to get a mild stretch for 20 seconds and relax for 20 seconds. This is a slow and gentle stretch. Do not pull hard or the fracture can move requiring more surgery.
 - Pull towel so that foot turns to side (eversion); hold for 20 seconds, then pull to the other side (inversion); hold for 20 seconds.
 - Bend leg at 90 degree angle and loop towel around forefoot. With knee bent gently pull foot back for 20 seconds and relax for 20 seconds.
- **Ankle range of motion:** You can do this exercise sitting or lying down. Pretend you are writing each of the letters of the alphabet with your foot. This will move your ankle in all directions. Do this twice in capitals, then small letters, then cursive. This is the most important of all the exercises. Do this deliberately and try to “write neatly” even if you have “Doctor Handwriting”.

PHASE 2: WEEK 6-12

- **Slant-board Stretch:**
 - Stand with heels on board and lean forward
 - Turn toes in with heels on board and lean forward
 - Stand with knees bent and heels down
 - Stand with knees bent, point toes inwards and keep heels down on board.
- **Wall Stretch:** Facing a wall, put your hands against the wall at about eye level. Keep the injured leg back, the uninjured leg forward, and the heel of your injured leg on the floor. Lean into wall and hold for 15-20 seconds. Repeat 3 times.
 - Knee straight; toes straight ahead
 - Knee straight; toes pointed in
- **Calf Stretch:** Stand facing a wall with your hands at about chest level. With both knees slightly bent and the injured foot back, gently lean into the wall until you feel a stretch in your lower calf. Once again, angle the toes of your injured foot slightly inward and keep

your heel down on the floor. Lean into wall and hold gentle stretch for 15-20 seconds. Repeat 3 times.

- Knees bent; toes straight ahead
- Knees bent; toes pointed in
- **Thera-Band:**
 - **Dorsiflexion** – Sitting with your leg out straight and your foot near a door, wrap the Thera-Band around the ball of your foot. Anchor the other end of the Thera-Band to the door by tying a knot in the Thera-Band, slipping it between the door and the frame, and closing the door. Pull your toes toward your face. Return slowly to the starting position. Repeat 10 times. Do 3 sets of 10.
 - **Plantarflexion** – Sitting with your leg outstretched, loop the middle section of the Thera-Band around the ball of your foot. Hold the ends of the Thera-Band in both hands. Gently press the ball of your own foot down and point your toes, stretching the Thera-Band. Return to the starting position. Repeat 10 times. Do 3 sets of 10.
 - **Inversion** – Sit with your legs out straight and cross your uninjured leg over your injured ankle. Wrap the Thera-Band around the ball of your injured foot and then loop it around your uninjured foot so that the Thera-Band is anchored at one end. Hold the other end of the Thera-Band in your hand. Turn your injured foot inward and upward. This will stretch the tubing. Return to the starting position. Repeat 10 times. Do 3 sets of 5.
 - **Eversion** – Sitting with both legs outstretched and the Thera-Band looped around both feet, slowly turn your injured foot upward and outward. Hold this position for 5 seconds. Repeat 10 times. Do 3 sets of 5.
- **Heel raises:** Standing, balance yourself on both feet behind a chair. Rise up on your toes, hold for 5 seconds and then lower yourself down. Repeat 10 times. Do 3 sets of 10.
- **Heel/Toe Walking:**
 - Walk on heels only, for 30 steps.
 - Walk on toes only, for 30 steps
- **Toe Raises:** Stand in a normal weight-bearing position. Rock back on your heels so that your toes come off the ground. Hold this position for 5-10 seconds. Repeat 10 times. Do 3 sets of 10.
- **Single leg balance:** Stand with balance support and attempt to balance only on your injured leg. Begin with your eyes open and then try to perform the exercise with your eyes closed. Then try it with your knee bent. Hold the single-leg position for 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.
- **Tiltboard (when bones are healed after week 8-12 and at a gym or your PT office):** Place foot in center of tilt board. Rotate foot so that the edge of the circle touches the floor in a constant motion. Repeat 10 clockwise the 10 counterclockwise each of the following: Seated, then Standing with knees bent, then Standing with knees straight.
- **Ankle Weights (when bones are healed on xray at 6-12 weeks and with doctor approval):** Attach 3lb weight to forefoot. With time and when 3lbs is easy advance to 5lbs.
 - Lying on back, pull foot toward you; 3 sets of 10 reps.
 - Lying on injured ankle side, pull foot toward the ceiling, 3 sets of 10 reps.
 - Lying on stomach, point toe as hard as possible, 3 sets of 10 reps.
 - Lying on uninjured side, pull foot toward the ceiling, 3 sets of 10 reps.