

# INSERTIONAL ACHILLES SURGERY

## Postoperative Recovery Protocol

**Type of Procedure:** inpatient  
**Length of Procedure:** 1 hour  
**Anesthesia:** General anesthetic with nerve block

At the insertion of your Achilles tendon into the heel bone, there is a spur, or extra bone growing into the tendon. This is causing inflammation and chronic pain. The operation involves removing 50 % of the Achilles attachment from the heel bone, excising the spur and then re-attaching the tendon with a special suture anchor technique.

The recovery from the operation can take some time. To limit the chance of a complication, you need to look after the operation site by keeping the foot and ankle elevated as much as possible for the first 10 days or so to allow the swelling to settle.

A moon boot will then be applied after you come out of the splint and rehabilitation will commence. Depending on your work, you will have to take off between 2 and 6 weeks off.

### **General Recovery Facts**

- The goal of surgery is to return you to full healing and strength of the tendon as quickly as possible
- You will need to use crutches for two to three weeks after surgery
- When the stitches are removed, you will begin walking in a removable boot
- No cast is used for your recovery
- There will be a heel raise in the boot to lift the heel off the ground, taking tension off the tendon when walking
- Walking and exercise are very important after the surgery and a careful physical therapy program which I have developed will be necessary
- Strength of the leg after the reconstruction is good, but you can have some discomfort in the area for quite a while.
- You will be able to push off with one leg, play tennis etc.
- You will need to work hard in physical therapy to regain strength in the leg

### **Specific Post-operative recovery**

#### **Day 1**

1. Foot wrapped in bulky bandage with plaster preventing movement of the leg
2. Ice, elevate, take pain medication



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3. Expect numbness in leg for 4 –12 hours then pain, and bloody drainage is expected
4. Do not allow foot to hang down

#### Day 10-14

1. First follow-up in the office, dressing is changed
2. Placed in boot with foot positioned in slight equinus, and plantarflexion (downward movement of foot) is allowed. There is a block to upward movement of the ankle
3. You can start full weight-bearing in the boot

#### 3-6 weeks

1. If incision is dry, swimming is permitted, and walking in a pool without support is allowed
2. Gentle exercise on bicycle permitted with the boot
3. At 6 weeks the boot comes up to a neutral position, and start physical therapy, and you can start biking without boot.
4. More vigorous exercise with physical therapist

#### 8-weeks

1. Can discontinue use of boot. Physical therapy and exercise is essential for recovery and will last for two months. You will need to do exercises for strengthening every day for two further months.
2. It is useful to have a lift put on the heel of your shoe for two months until the strength has returned
3. The complications that can be encountered are: infection of the wound, Deep vein thrombosis, Nerve I nerve injury or numbness, Achilles rupture, weakness and calf muscle wasting.

