

Ankle Reconstruction - Postoperative Physiotherapy

PHASE 1: RECOVERY

0-2 WEEKS

GENERAL

- Plaster backslab or CamBoot.
- Non-weight-bearing.

PHYSIOTHERAPY

Goals:

- Prevent complications e.g.: DVT.
- Maintain movement and strength in unaffected joints.

Exercises:

- Hip and knee range of motion exercises.
- Quadriceps, hamstrings and gluteal strengthening.
- Deep breathing exercises.

2-4 WEEKS

GENERAL

- Transfer to camwalker boot or ankle brace (ASO or equivalent).
- Commence weight bearing, PWB or WBAT depending on surgeon's instructions.

PHYSIOTHERAPY

Goals:

- Control pain.
- Control swelling.
- Regain active movements.

Exercises:

- Free active plantarflexion, dorsiflexion, eversion.
- NO active inversion until 6 weeks post op.
- Towel stretch into dorsiflexion (gentle).
- Swimming (no kicking), when wound healing appropriate.

4-6 WEEKS

GENERAL

- Weight bearing as comfortable (WBAT).
- Continue bracing (ASO or Boot) for majority of 'up' time.

PHYSIOTHERAPY

Goals:

- Control swelling.
- Avoid impingement (in any direction).
- Avoid synovitis.
- Commence strengthening.

Exercises:

- Continue active ROM.
- Commence PF, DF, EV Theraband strengthening.
- Seated calf raises.
- Static balance drills.
- Swimming (no kicking).
- Exercise / Stationary bike.

PHASE 2: STRENGTHENING / NEUROMUSCULAR TRAINING

6 WEEKS +

GENERAL

- Normal gait.
- Commence inversion movements.
- Progress to general strength, proprioception, balance.
- Ankle brace only for "high risk activities" or uneven surfaces.

PHYSIOTHERAPY

Goals:

- Minimal swelling.
- +4cm lunge or better (knee to wall).
- Single leg balance 1 minute (eyes open).
- Double leg calf raises 3 x 30.
- Eversion strength 4/5.

Exercises:

- Theraband strengthening all directions.
- Double leg calf raises, progress to single leg calf raises.
- Advanced balance / proprioception, i.e.: wobble board, foam etc.
- Calf stretching.
- Swimming with gentle kick.
- Cycling as comfortable.



PHASE 3: RETURN TO SPORT

PHYSIOTHERAPY

Goals:

- Single leg balance, 1 minute, eyes open.
- Single leg calf raises 3 x 30.
- Single leg squat to 90°.
- Lunge +6cm.
- Hopping on the spot.
- Normal lower limb mechanics (including pelvis / hip / knee control).
- Direction change tests within 10% of other side.
- Wean off brace.

Exercises:

- Single leg heel raises.
- Calf stretching ++.
- Theraband strengthening, focus on dorsiflexion and eversion.
- Hop and land.
- Ladder hopping.
- Lateral hopping.
- Running, cycling, swimming.

PHASE 4: PREVENTION OF RECURRENCE

PHYSIOTHERAPY

Goals:

- Normal mechanics.
- High-level balance.
- Landing strategies.
- Direction change strategies.

Exercises:

- Advanced landing drills, +/- external factors i.e.: catching/marketing.
- "Feedforward" training.
- Advanced balance integration i.e.: strength work on BOSU ball.
- Plyometric training.

Produced with the help of Balwyn Sports & Physiotherapy Centre

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