

Achilles Tendon Non-Operative Protocol

Dr. Scott M. Holthusen

This protocol provides a general guideline for recovery and progression of rehabilitation according to specified time frames. Specific changes in the program will be made by the physician as appropriate for the individual patient. It may take up to a year to make full recovery, and it is not unusual to have intermittent pains and aches during that time.

*****Please fax initial assessment and subsequent progress notes directly to Dr. Holthusen at (952) 442-2029.**

Phase 1: Day 1-9

Goals

- Control swelling and pain with elevation and activity modification
- Non weight bearing with crutches or walker
- Encourage ADL as much as possible
- Education: surgery, anatomy, healing time, rehab phases

Guidelines

- Hanging equinus cast or Cam Boot with 2cm heel lift
- Hip AROM: lying and standing
- Knee AROM: lying and standing

Phase 2: Day 10-27

Goals

- Non weight bearing in CAM boot with 2 cm heel lift
- Begin Physical therapy
- Modalities to control swelling/promote healing

Guidelines

- Active dorsiflexion to neutral, passive plantar flexion (sit with foot hanging, allow foot to drop) actively dorsiflex to neutral only
 - Inversion/eversion in less than neutral- 5 minutes every hour
- Knee/Hip exercises as appropriate
- NWB fitness/cardio

Phase 3: 4-5 Weeks

Goals

- Continue to progress active ROM with physical therapy
- Gradual increase of ADLs

Guidelines

- Continue non weight bearing in CAM boot - remove 1st part of heel lift
- Continue all other exercises/modalities as above
- Toe flexion/extension
- Stretching: glut max, glut med, piriformis, hamstring gentle, rectus femoris
- Core exercises:
 - Abdominal recruitment
 - Bridging on ball with feet lightly against wall
 - Ball reach

Phase 4: 6-7 Weeks**Goals**

- Begin weight bearing progression in CAM boot
- Continue other exercises/modalities as previously
- Increase core, hip, and knee Strength

Guidelines

- Remove second portion of heel lift
- Start WB at 20 pounds and progress every 3 days by 20# - wean off crutches when full WB
- Continue boot/night splint

Phase 5: 8-11 Weeks**Goals**

- Transition into regular shoe wear with small heel lift
 - May discontinue lift once approved through PT

Guidelines

- Weight bearing as tolerated in shoes
- Light weight resistance band ROM
- Static single-leg stance balance exercises
- Proprioception and gait retraining
- Fitness/Cardio to include WBAT (primarily walking)

Phase 6: 12-15 Weeks

Goals

- Increase weight bearing tolerance
- Increase strength through PT and activity progression
- Begin light stretching

Guidelines

- Continue to progress pre-heel raise strengthening with proprioception/gait/fitness
- Double leg heel raises
- Progress gradually to single leg heel raise by reducing support of contralateral leg

Phase 7: 16-19 Weeks**Goals**

- Continue to progress strength, proprioception, endurance
- Progress stretching

Guidelines

- Single leg heel raises
- Step downs, progress from 2-inch step gradually to 8-inch step

Phase 8: 20-24 Weeks**Goals**

- Increase dynamic WB exercises including plyometric and sports specific training if able to perform 10 step down reps with good form from 6-8 inch step
- Full lower extremity strength
- Progress towards maximum function

Guidelines

- Progress to advance dynamic drills
 - hopping
 - skipping
 - progress to sport specific drills
- Emphasis on
 - Proprioception: wobble board, Sissel, Fitter
 - Strength training through range
- Running

Phase 9: 25+ Weeks**Goals**

- Begin higher level sports activities: soccer, basketball, volleyball