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Achilles Tendon Tear Non-Surgical Treatment

PHASE I – IMMEDIATE POST-OPERATIVE PHASE (WEEK 0-2)

- Goals
 - Protection of injured tendon
- CAM boot with 3 heel wedges
 - Wear boot while sleeping
 - Allowed to remove boot for washing and airing the foot. When boot is removed, no weight bearing or dorsiflexion of foot is allowed. This may cause damage to the healing tendon.
 - CAM boot should be worn when sleeping
- Weight Bearing
 - As tolerated in boot
 - Use of crutches as needed
- Exercises (at home while wearing the boot)
 - Toe flexion/extension (3x20 repetitions, once per hour)

PHASE II – PROTECTION PHASE (WEEK 2-4)

- Goals
 - Protection of healing tendon
- CAM boot with 2 heel wedges
 - Wear boot while sleeping
 - Allowed to remove boot for washing and airing the foot. When boot is removed, no weight bearing or dorsiflexion of foot is allowed.
- Weight Bearing
 - As tolerated in boot
 - Wean from crutches as tolerated
- Exercise program
 - Home exercises
 - Performed while wearing boot
 - Isometric submaximal plantar flexion (5x5 seconds, once per hour)
 - Toe exercises (flexion/extension, once per hour)

WEEK 5-6:

- Goals
 - Protection of healing tendon
- CAM boot with 1 heel wedge
 - Wear boot while sleeping

- Allowed to remove boot for washing and airing the foot. When boot is removed, no weight bearing or dorsiflexion of foot is allowed.
- Weight Bearing
 - As tolerated in boot
- Exercise program
 - Home exercises as above, may increase intensity

WEEK 7-8:

- CAM boot with no heel wedge
 - Allowed to remove boot for washing and airing the foot. When boot is removed, no weight bearing or dorsiflexion of foot is allowed.
- Weight Bearing
 - Full with boot
- Exercise program
 - Home exercises as above, may increase intensity

WEEK 9-12:

- Visit with Dr. Ridley
- CAM boot
 - Wean out of boot
 - Use shoes with a heel lift until 14 weeks after injury
- Weight Bearing
 - Full weight bearing in shoe with heel lift
- Physical Therapy (2x per week)
 - Exercise bike
 - AROM to 0 degrees plantarflexion
 - Active plantar flexion in cable machine (ROM as above)
 - Sitting heel-rise – with weight
 - Supination/pronation exercises with rubber band
 - Gait training and balance exercises
 - Squats (fitness ball behind back)
 - Other hip/knee exercises with no ankle involvement
 - Leg press
 - Other hip/knee exercises with no ankle involvement

WEEK 13-14:

- Use of shoes with heel-lift until 14 weeks after injury
- Use of regular shoes after 12 weeks, barefoot after 14 weeks
- Home exercises
 - As above
 - Walking 20 min per day
- Physical Therapy (2x per week)
 - As above, increase intensity

- Balance exercises
- Standing heel-rise on 2 legs, progress gradually to 1 leg

WEEK 15-16:

- Home exercises
 - As above
- Physical Therapy (2x per week)
 - Intensify exercises by increasing load
 - Increase load gradually from 2 leg standing heel-rises to 1 leg
 - Both concentric and eccentric
 - Quick rebounding heel-rises
 - Gentle jogging
 - Start with 2-legged jumps, gradually increase

WEEK 17+:

- Visit with Dr. Ridley to discuss return to sport
- Running outdoors (if good technique)
- Return to sports at earliest after 16 weeks (non-contact) and 20 weeks (contact)