



# *Post Operative Instructions: Ankle Fracture ORIF*

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## **ACTIVITY**

- No weight bearing with your operative leg until permitted by your surgeon. Please use crutches to assist with walking.
- Do not engage in prolonged standing or walking for the first 7–10 days after surgery.
- Avoid long periods of sitting without elevating your leg and avoid long-distance travel for 2 weeks.
- You may move your hip and knee as much as you would like.

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## **SPLINT**

- Keep the splint clean, dry, and in place at all times. Do not get the splint wet.
- If you are going to shower, protect the splint with a garbage bag, Saran wrap, etc., to keep it dry.
  - A sponge bath is recommended initially, especially since it is difficult to stand on one leg in the shower, particularly when using opioid pain medications.
- Do not stick objects down your splint, even if it itches underneath.
  - If you experience itching, you may “knock” on the splint—the vibration often helps relieve the sensation.
- Your splint will be removed at your first postoperative clinic appointment.
  - If you feel significant pressure points inside your splint before this visit, please inform Dr. Karch’s care team.

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## **DRESSING & INCISION CARE**

- A small amount of red-tinged drainage on the dressing during the first 2 days is normal.
- Keep the dressing clean and dry; protect it while bathing or showering.
- Remove the dressing 4 days after surgery.
- You may apply Band-Aids to the incisions or leave them open to air.
- Do not apply Bacitracin or other ointments.
- Avoid soaking in pools, lakes, hot tubs, or the ocean until sutures are removed and the incision is fully healed.

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## **PAIN & SWELLING MANAGEMENT**

### Ice

- Apply ice wrapped in a dry towel 20 minutes at a time, several times per day for the first week, then as needed.

### Compression

- Use an ACE wrap or white stocking to reduce swelling.
- The white stocking should be worn for 5–7 days to help prevent blood clots and reduce knee swelling.

### Elevation

- Keep your foot elevated above heart level as much as possible for the first 3–4 days.
- Place a pillow under your calf or foot, not under the knee.

### Pain Medications

- Take your prescribed medications as directed.

#### Tylenol (Acetaminophen)

- First-line for pain.
- Take 1000 mg every 6–8 hours.
- Do not exceed 1000 mg per dose or 4000 mg per day (limit to 3000 mg/day if you have liver issues).
- Do not drink alcohol while taking Tylenol.

#### Oxycodone

- For moderate to severe breakthrough pain only.
- Use sparingly and wean off as soon as possible.

#### Common side effects include:

- Nausea: Take with food.
- Drowsiness: Do not drive or operate machinery.
- Itching: Benadryl may help.
- Constipation:
  - Use stool softeners (e.g., Senna-Docusate) or OTC options (Mineral Oil, Milk of Magnesia, etc).
  - Avoid bananas, rice, apples, toast, and yogurt (may worsen constipation).
  - Light walking helps stimulate bowel function.

#### Refills:

- If you think you will need a refill, you must request it during regular weekday office hours.
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### **DVT PROPHYLAXIS**

- Take Aspirin 162 mg daily as prescribed.
    - This is not for pain—it's to reduce the risk of blood clots (DVT/pulmonary embolism).
    - If you are at higher risk, you may be placed on Lovenox instead. If you are already on anticoagulation, you may have a different plan.
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### **EMERGENCIES**

You must have someone stay with you during the first 48 hours after surgery.

Call the clinic or the on-call orthopedist if:

- Drainage soaks the dressing, increases, smells foul, or if incisions become red, warm, or very painful.
  - You develop a fever >101.5°F or chills.
  - You experience leg or calf pain, swelling, or shortness of breath.
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### **FOLLOW-UP CARE**

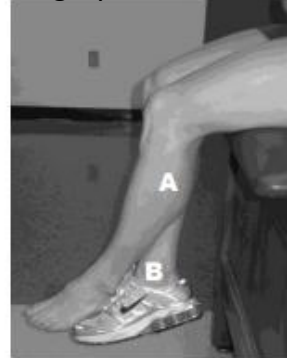
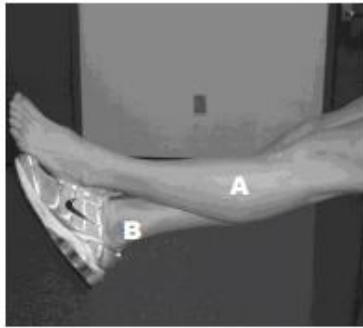
- Schedule a follow-up appointment at ~2 weeks postoperatively for a wound check, suture removal, and review of your surgical findings.
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## EXERCISES

- When you feel ready, you may perform each exercise 2–3 times per day.
- It may help to take pain medication 20–30 minutes beforehand and apply ice afterward.

### Flexion:

1. Sit in a chair and remove or unlock your brace
2. Place your unoperated leg (B) under the foot of your operated leg (A)
3. Gently allow the knee to bend by doing ALL work with the unoperated leg (B)
4. When you reach your maximum bend, hold for 5 seconds
5. Use the unoperated leg (B) to straighten the knee
6. Perform 10-20 times in a row
7. **Goal = 90° of flexion** (bending) by 2 weeks after surgery



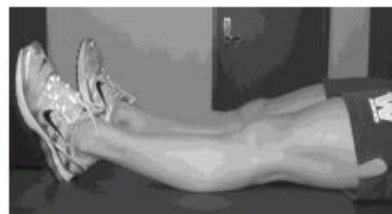
### Quadriceps Contractions:

1. Sit or lie on the floor with your operated leg straight
2. Place a towel roll under the knee
3. Tighten your thigh and hamstring muscles, causing you to press your knee down into the towel roll
4. Hold this position for 10 seconds
5. Relax your thigh and hamstring muscles

Perform 2-3 sets of 10

### Straight Leg Raises:

1. Lie on the floor with your brace on and locked
2. Perform a quadriceps contraction (as stated in the above exercise)
3. Raise your foot about 6-12" off the floor
4. Slowly lower your leg back to the floor
5. Relax your thigh muscle



Perform 2-3 sets of 10