

ANKLE ARTHRODESIS

Post-operative Recovery Protocol

Type of Procedure:	Outpatient or in hospital for one night
Length of Procedure:	1.5 hours
Anesthesia:	General anesthesia or twilight with a nerve Block

Ankle Arthrodesis: What Is It?

The goal of this type of surgery is to fuse or glue together (arthrodesis) the ankle joint. This type of surgery does affect the up and down movement of the ankle. You will however not lose all of the up and down movement, but about 75% of it. This depends of course on how much movement in the ankle you have already lost. Frequently after ankle injury or arthritis, there is very little movement in the ankle, so that you will not notice the loss of the up and down movement of the foot. The side to side movement (inversion and eversion) of the back of the foot is not affected by an ankle arthrodesis. Screws are inserted into the ankle joint to hold the joint together while the fusion occurs. Once the joint is fused the screws are not necessary, but are rarely removed.

An Arthroscopic fusion is appropriate in select cases when there is little deformity or bone loss. Instead of an incision, two small portals (keyhole surgery) are used in the front of the ankle to prepare the joint surfaces before screws are inserted to hold the joint in a good position before the fusion takes place. This results in less wound healing problems and a faster functional recovery. The fusion rates are the same for the both procedures.

General Recovery Facts

- You will not be walking on the leg for 6-8 weeks
- In order to stay off your foot, you will need to use crutches, a walker, a wheelchair or a scooter type device called a roll-about
- There will be a hard plaster bandage applied to the leg for two weeks after surgery
- Your first follow up visit will be at approximately 2 weeks to remove the stitches
- We will apply a cast at this time, or elect to apply a moon boot.
- If the surgery is on your left ankle, you should be able to drive an automatic vehicle at two weeks. If the surgery is on the right foot, you may drive at about 6 weeks or sooner after discussion with your surgeon.
- You may begin to walk in the boot at about 6 weeks, depending upon your level of discomfort, and the instructions given to you
- There will be moderate swelling of the foot, ankle and leg for about 6 months
- You will continue to improve your strength for about 9 months after the surgery. 3 months to be fair, 9 months to be GOOD.



Specific Post-operative recovery

Day 1

- Foot wrapped in bulky bandage and hard plaster splint
- Ice, elevate, take pain medication, and expect numbness in foot 12-24 hours
- Bloody drainage through bandage expected, but do not change bandage

Day 10-14

- First follow-up in the office, the dressing is changed
- Placed in cast and no weight bearing on the foot at all for 6-8 weeks

Week 6-8

- Cast removed, X-rays taken
- Application of a boot
- Full weight bearing is allowed in the cast or boot after the 6-8 week mark
- An orthotic arch support and supportive shoes can provide a good transition from the boot to walking.

Week 6-12

- Walking in the boot- boot not at night.
- Physiotherapy, swimming and hydrotherapy.

