



Austin Cole, MD

Anterior Tibialis Reconstruction Post-Operative Protocol

Weeks 0-2

- Postoperative splint
- Non-weight bearing with crutches, no scooter use
- Wound protection

Weeks 2-6

- Short leg cast
- Non-weight bearing with crutches
 - May use scooter pending MD approval

Weeks 6-8

- Walking boot—must be in boot at all times
 - Must sleep in boot until 8 weeks
 - Must keep boot on for showering until 8 weeks
- Patient to receive prescription for AFO at 6 weeks post-op
- Weight bearing progression 25% per week
- Start PT
 - Open kinetic chain exercises for general lower extremity strengthening
 - Must be in boot with all exercises
- Non-weight bearing fitness/cardiovascular exercises
 - May do stationary bike with boot

Weeks 8-12

- Transition to AFO at all times beginning at 8 weeks
 - May shower out of AFO: must sit down, take off AFO, shower, put on AFO, stand
- Continue lower extremity strengthening
 - Closed Kinetic Chain exercises as tolerated
- Non-weight bearing fitness/cardiovascular exercises (bicycling with one leg, may do stationary bike with boot and NuStep with boot)
- May begin active plantarflexion; passive dorsiflexion, inversion and eversion
- Intrinsic foot strengthening
 - Toe curls, marble pickups, etc.
- Proprioceptive and gait retraining

Weeks 12-16

- Begin active ankle motion pending MD approval at 12 week post-op visit
- Wean out of AFO over 2 weeks
- Normalize gait mechanics with treadmill walking under PT supervision with transition into shoe
- Progression of closed chain strengthening—double limb to single limb
- Continue balance training, progressing to unstable surfaces (double limb)

Weeks 16-20

- Begin resistive ankle exercises
- Continue balance training, progressing to unstable surfaces
 - Double limb to single limb
- Pass Preliminary Functional Test >90% on all tests at 20 weeks post-op

Weeks 20+

- Plyometric training
- Initiate return to running
 - May begin with chest deep water treadmill running, or Alter G
 - Criteria to run:
 - Pass preliminary functional test >90%
 - Equal ROM
 - Equal strength
- Sport specific training as needed
 - Agility ladder—sagittal plane progressing to frontal planes and multidirectional
 - Cutting; stop and go movements
 - Landing and jumping