

Post Operative Instructions  
Achilles Tendon Repair  
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You have undergone Achilles tendon repair. Following these guidelines should give you the best chance for a quick recovery.

**Diet:** Advance to solid food as tolerated.

**Bandages:** Leave your cast or splint on until you follow up in the office in 7-10 days. If you flew in from out of town for surgery, your cast may be removed by your athletic trainer.

**Bathing/Shower:** You should keep the surgical site dry until your incision is fully healed. This generally takes 7-10 days. For the first 7-10 days after surgery, you will be in a cast or splint, which you will need to keep dry. During this time, you should consider sponge bathing or taking a bath. Once the incision is fully healed, as determined by Dr. Browdy, you may get your incision wet in the shower, but you should avoid submerging under water until you are four weeks out of surgery.

**Activity:** You will leave the surgery center with a cast or splint on the leg. This should be left intact and should be left clean and dry. You may **not** put *any* weight on the leg until you are told otherwise; therefore, you will require crutches. Generally, it is a good idea to undergo crutch training prior to your surgical date.

It is advisable to get up and “move around” in much as you can tolerate after surgery, as doing so helps prevent blood clots. However, whenever you are not specifically up moving around, it is important to elevate your leg. Try to keep the foot above the heart level. It is also very important to avoid pressure directly on your heel, as prolonged periods of pressure on the heel can lead to ulcers. The best way to elevate the leg without putting direct pressure on the heel or the Achilles incision site is by placing pillows under the calf area, allowing the heel and the incision area to “float”. You

### Activity (cont.)

should try to place the pillows over a broad area of the calf, higher than the achilles area, under the muscular part of the calf - not the achilles area.

You may require pain medication for 7-10 days after surgery. Please do not drive after taking pain medication. Plan to have a family member or friend assist with transportation.

When the splint or cast comes off, you will be placed in cam walker (boot). This will generally stay on until you are approximately eight weeks out of surgery.

### Medications:

Many patients elect to have a “block” prior to surgery to help with postoperative pain relief. This block provide significant pain relief in the early postoperative period, but it will wear off 12-24 hours after surgery. Your leg will likely feel weak for the duration of the nerve block.

You will be prescribed narcotic pain medication to help with pain control that you might experience after the block wears off. It is very important to “stay ahead” of the pain by taking the medication prior to the onset of pain. In other words, **do not wait until you hurt to take her pain medication.** We generally recommend taking your pain medication approximately every six hours during the first 24 hours after surgery. One good strategy is to take the medication about an hour prior to going to bed and plan to take it six hours prior to that time as well.

Pain medicine can cause nausea, so take the medication with food. You may be given a prescription to help with nausea. You do not need to fill this prescription, but you should keep handy in the event that you need it.

**Blood Clot  
Prevention:**

It is critical that you understand that any lower extremity trauma of any sort can increase the risk of blood clots. There have been reports of increased risk of blood clots associated with Achilles ruptures, both with operative and non-operative treatment. Unless you have a specific reason why you cannot take aspirin products, **Dr. Browdy would like you to start one full aspirin (325 mg) daily, starting the day after surgery.** While this can help reduce the risk of blood clot formation, you should understand that there is no consensus in the literature that provides specific guidance on whether or not medication for blood clot prevention after Achilles surgery is recommended. We feel the risk to taking the medication is low.

However, you still must remain vigilant about the warning signs of a possible blood clot, which may include:

- Calf pain out of proportion to the norm
- A painful “knot” or cord in the calf
- Severe swelling of the calf, foot or ankle out of proportion to the norm
- Fever, chest pain or shortness of breath

**Problems:**

You may experience swelling and soreness for several days. This is to be expected. You should contact the office if you experience:

1. Severe pain
2. Temperature above 101°
3. Pain, redness or significant swelling in your calf

In general, please call if you have **any** questions.

**Appointments:**

You will need a follow-up appointment 7-10 days after surgery. Please call the office at 314-721-7325 to make an appointment. If you are from out of town and are recovering elsewhere, alternative arrangements may be made.

**Phone Numbers:**

Advanced Orthopedics and Sports Medicine: 314-721-7325

**Medication  
Refill Policy:**

**It is the policy of Advanced Orthopedics that narcotic medications will only be refilled during office hours. Please be patient with the office staff. If you call during patient hours, your call may be returned at the end of the day.**

**Postop Protocol:**

Every achilles tear and every repair are different. Therefore, the postoperative protocol may vary from patient to patient. When possible, we try to adhere to the following protocol:

- 1 Week postop - remove cast/splint and apply cam walker with 6 heel lifts; strict non-weight bearing with crutches. Remove stitch if wound is healed.
- 3 weeks postop - 50% weight bearing in cam walker with 6 heel lifts
- 4 weeks postop - 75% weight bearing in cam walker with 4 heel lifts
- 5 weeks postop - WBAT in cam walker with 2 heel lifts
- 6 weeks postop - WBAT in cam walker with no heel lifts
- 8 weeks postop - slowly wean out of cam walker as tolerated, begin PT with gentle ROM and very light strengthening