

Post Operative Instructions
Achilles Tendon Repair
Jason Browdy, M.D.

You have just had an 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.

Bathing/Shower: You should keep the surgical site dry until your incision is fully healed. This generally take 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, splint or boot 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” is 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 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.

Activity (cont.):

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 two narcotic pain medications to help with control the pain 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 severe pain. We recommend using oxycodone for a maximum of 48 hours. Take your first dose before bed time the night of surgery. You should switch to hydrocodone on the third day after surgery. Once you start to regain sensation in the toes or foot, it is advisable to take your pain medicine - **do not wait until you hurt to take your pain medicine.**

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

Blood Clot Prevention:

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. Please contact Dr. Browdy's office if you have any of the following:

1. Severe Pain
2. A Temperature above 101 Degrees
3. Pain, redness or significant swelling in your knee or calf (a bruised appearance is normal)

Please call us if you have **any** questions.

Appointments:

You will need to see Dr. Browdy for a follow-up appointment 7-10 days after surgery. Please call the office at 314-991-2150 to make this appointment.

Phone Numbers:

Motion Orthopaedics: 314-991-2150

For any urgent need after normal business hours or on weekends you may call the after hours line at 1-888-456-8166.

Medication Refill Policy:

It is the policy of Motion Orthopaedics 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.