



Total ankle replacement (TAR)

Preoperative Phase

- Evaluation and Planning: CT scan is ordered for planning purposes 6 weeks prior to surgery.
- Patient Education: Detailed discussions with the patient regarding the procedure, risks, benefits, and rehabilitation process.
- Preoperative Physical Therapy: May be recommended to strengthen the muscles around the ankle and improve overall fitness.
- Practice using crutches or assistive walking devices at home

Postoperative Phase

Immediate Postoperative (Week 0-4)

- Outpatient surgery
- Pain Management: Use of medications, including opioids and acetaminophen (avoiding non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs - NSAIDs).
- Immobilization: The ankle is typically immobilized in a splint or cast.
- Elevation and Ice: To reduce swelling and pain. While the splint or cast is on ice behind the knee.
- Non-Weight Bearing: Use of crutches or a walker; no weight on the operated foot.
- Suture Removal: Around 10-14 days post-surgery.

Intermediate Recovery (Weeks 5-8)

- Follow-Up Visits: Regular check-ups with the surgeon to monitor healing.
- Transition to Boot: After the initial immobilization period, transition to a walking boot.
- Begin Gentle Range of Motion (ROM) Exercises: To maintain mobility in the ankle joint.
- Gradual progression to partial weight-bearing as advised by the surgeon.
- Physical Therapy: Start formal physical therapy to improve strength, flexibility, and balance.
- Gradual Weight Bearing: Transition to full weight-bearing as tolerated and guided by the therapist.
- Increase Activity: Gradual increase in daily activities, including walking and light exercises.

Late Recovery (Weeks 9-12 and beyond)

- Continued Physical Therapy: Focus on improving gait, strength, and function.
- Return to Normal Activities: Gradual return to normal activities and possibly low-impact sports.
- Monitoring for Complications: Watch for signs of infection, implant issues, or other complications.

Long-Term Maintenance

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- Regular Check-Ups: Periodic visits to the surgeon to monitor the condition of the implant.
- Lifestyle Modifications: Avoid high-impact activities that could stress the artificial joint.
- Strengthening and Flexibility Exercises: Continue exercises to maintain joint health and overall mobility.

Considerations

- Compliance: Adherence to the rehabilitation protocol is crucial for successful recovery.
- Individual Variability: Recovery time and progression may vary based on individual factors such as age, overall health, and adherence to the rehabilitation program.
- Complications: Be aware of potential complications such as infection, implant loosening, or wear, and seek prompt medical attention if any issues arise.

This protocol provides a general guideline and could change depending on each individual's progression, but it's important to follow the specific instructions and recommendations given by your surgeon and physical therapist. For any other questions, concerns, or updates, please call our office to discuss with the medical assistant.

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