

# ANKLE FRACTURE SURGERY RECOVERY GUIDE

## *Postoperative Instructions*

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## **Welcome**

You've just had surgery to repair your ankle fracture. This guide explains what to expect during your recovery over the next year. Healing takes time, and every patient progresses at their own pace. These guidelines help you understand the typical path forward.

## **0–2 WEEKS AFTER SURGERY**

### **Your Focus: Rest, Protect, and Control Swelling**

#### **What to Expect**

- Swelling, bruising, and discomfort are normal
- Your ankle needs strict protection during this early healing phase

#### **What You Should Do**

- Keep your foot **elevated above your heart** as much as possible
- Use crutches, walker, or knee scooter. iWalk
- Keep your bandages clean and dry - Cast protector for showers
- Take medications as prescribed
- **Do not put weight on your ankle** unless Dr. Brooks instructs otherwise

**Why This Matters** This stage allows your incision to heal and your bone to begin stabilizing.

## **2–6 WEEKS AFTER SURGERY**

### **Your Focus: Early Healing and Gentle Motion**

#### **What to Expect**

- You may still have swelling and stiffness
- Your surgeon may check X-rays to monitor healing

#### **What You Should Do**

- Continue using your cast or walking boot
- Keep swelling down with elevation
- Begin gentle ankle motion exercises if cleared
- Continue avoiding weight-bearing unless instructed otherwise

## **6–12 WEEKS AFTER SURGERY**

### **Your Focus: Regaining Movement and Starting Physical Therapy**

## What to Expect

- Many patients begin **partial or full weight bearing** during this stage
- Swelling may increase when you start walking again

## What You Should Do

- Transition from cast to walking boot if directed
- Start **physical therapy**
- Work on gentle strengthening and range-of-motion exercises
- Gradually increase walking as allowed

**Typical Progress:** Significant recovery often occurs between **6–16 weeks**.

## 3–6 MONTHS AFTER SURGERY

### Your Focus: Strength, Balance, and Normal Walking

## What to Expect

- You may still have swelling after activity
- Your walking pattern improves with therapy

## What You Should Do

- Walk in a regular shoe with good support
- Continue physical therapy
- Begin low-impact activities like cycling or swimming
- Work on strength, balance, and flexibility

## 6–12 MONTHS AFTER SURGERY

### Your Focus: Returning to Full Activity

## What to Expect

- Some patients recover fully by 3–4 months
- More complex fractures may take **up to a year**
- Occasional swelling after long days is common

## What You Should Do

- Continue strengthening exercises
- Return to higher-impact activities (running, sports) if cleared
- Maintain good ankle mobility and balance

## HELPFUL TIPS FOR A SMOOTHER RECOVERY

- Stay consistent with physical therapy
- Wear supportive shoes
- Eat foods rich in protein, calcium, and vitamin C
- Avoid smoking, which slows bone healing

- Be patient — recovery isn't always linear

**WHEN TO CALL THE CLINIC (541-345-0600)**

Contact Dr. Brooks' office right away if you notice:

- Fever, redness, or drainage from the incision
- Sudden increase in pain
- New numbness or tingling
- Trouble putting weight on the ankle after previously being able to
- Swelling that doesn't improve with rest and elevation