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REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

# Ankle Fracture ORIF — Early Weight-Bearing Protocol

Postoperative Rehabilitation Protocol — Ankle Fracture ORIF (Weber B / Weber C)

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> This protocol is a general guideline and does not replace individualized medical advice. Timelines vary with the procedure performed, healing, and individual factors. Always follow the specific instructions from your surgeon and physical therapist, which take precedence over this document.

General guideline – individualized based on injury and intraoperative findings. If your surgeon has placed you on the slower, protected (6 weeks non-weight-bearing) pathway, follow the Ankle Fracture "Slow Down" Protocol instead.

## Phase 1: Protection

0–2 Weeks

### GOALS

- Protect surgical repair
- Allow soft tissue healing
- Control swelling

### IMMOBILIZATION

- Posterior splint

### WEIGHT-BEARING

- Non-weight-bearing with crutches/scooter

### REHABILITATION

- Elevation above heart (most important)
- Toe motion
- Quad sets and straight leg raises
- Core and upper body conditioning

## Phase 2: Early Mobility

2–6 Weeks

### GOALS

- Restore gentle ankle motion
- Begin controlled weight-bearing
- Protect fixation

### IMMOBILIZATION

- CAM boot

### WEIGHT-BEARING

- Progress from partial → full weight-bearing in boot (as tolerated)

### REHABILITATION

- Active and passive ankle ROM (avoid aggressive stretching)
- Alphabet exercises
- Seated heel raises (light)
- Gentle theraband work (plantarflexion/dorsiflexion early, inversion/eversion later)

### PRECAUTIONS

- Avoid high-impact activity
- Avoid rotational stress if syndesmotic injury present

## Phase 3: Transition

6–12 Weeks

### GOALS

- Normalize gait
- Restore strength
- Improve proprioception

### REHABILITATION

- Progress strengthening (calf raises, bands, closed-chain exercises)
- Balance training (single-leg stance → unstable surfaces)
- Stationary bike, elliptical
- Begin light functional movement

### WEIGHT-BEARING

- Full weight-bearing in regular shoe with brace

## Phase 4: Advanced Rehab

12–16+ Weeks

### GOALS

- Restore power, agility, and endurance
- Prepare for return to sport

### RETURN TO ACTIVITY

- Typically around 4 months for many patients
- High-level athletes may take longer depending on injury severity

### REHABILITATION

- Plyometrics (progress gradually)
- Sport-specific drills
- Running progression (if appropriate)