



Ankle Fracture ORIF Rehabilitation Protocol

- **Weeks 0-2**
 - Most often the patient will be in a splint with crutches until first post-op visit. If not, then proceed with plan below
- **Weeks 2-6**
 - Goals: prevent stiffness, decrease swelling/inflammation, and protect fixation
 - Non-weightbearing (NWB) for 2-12 weeks depending on patient, fracture type, and surgery; please refer to surgeon's instructions on when to initiate weightbearing
 - Gait training/transfer training, most likely NWB in walking boot
 - Begin ankle ROM in all planes, emphasizing dorsiflexion
 - Start lower extremity PNF
 - Modalities as needed for muscle stimulation, pain control, swelling control
 - Emphasize consistent elevation and ice for swelling control, especially at home
- **Weeks 6-12**
 - Goals: improved swelling and pain, increase ROM, begin strengthening
 - Advance weightbearing status at surgeon's discretion; begin gait training/weightbearing in walking boot, and transition out as able; if patient remains NWB until 12 weeks then skip this step; when able to bear weight, start balance and proprioceptive training
 - Aggressive passive, active-assist, and active ROM of the ankle and foot
 - Progress strengthening of hip, knee, and ankle muscle groups
 - Emphasize importance of home exercise program
 - Modalities as needed for muscle stimulation, pain control, swelling control
 - Continue manual lower extremity PNF
 - Okay for hydro/aquatic therapy if available
- **Weeks 12+**
 - Goals: increase strength, return to work, sport, and/or pre-injury functional level with minimal to no restrictions
 - Advance weightbearing status at surgeon's discretion; begin gait training/weightbearing in walking boot, and transition out as able if not already initiated previously
 - Continue with balance and proprioceptive training, or start if not previously initiated
 - In older patient, hip abductor strengthening can be useful to prevent Trendelburg gait
 - Work on improving functional/ADL tasks as needed
 - Return to running program, if applicable
 - Functional/work-specific/sport strengthening and training, if applicable
 - Customized HEP to continue once PT/OT is completed

