

ACHILLES TENDON REPAIR

Your Instructions After Surgery



Stanford
MEDICINE



Medications

MEDICATION	WHAT IT IS FOR	HOW TO TAKE IT
Acetaminophen (Tylenol)	Baseline pain control	1,000 mg every 8 hours , on a schedule. No more than 3,000 mg in 24 hours.
Oxycodone 5 mg	Breakthrough pain not managed by other medications. Most people need it for the first few days to week after surgery.	1 to 2 tablets as needed every 4 to 6 hours.
Ondansetron (Zofran)	Nausea	As needed, as directed on the label.
Docusate (Colace)	Stool softener	Take while you are taking oxycodone, as directed on the label.
Aspirin	Blood clot prevention	81 mg twice a day for 6 weeks , starting the morning after surgery. If you have a higher risk of blood clots, Dr. Tummala may prescribe a stronger blood thinner instead.
Anti-inflammatory	Pain and swelling	May be an option for some patients. Take one only if Dr. Tummala recommends it and you can tolerate it.

Your medications may vary slightly from this list based on your current medications and health history. Any changes will be reviewed with you before surgery.

Example of a day in the first week

TIME	ACETAMINOPHEN	OXYCODONE
8 am	1,000 mg	Take 1 to 2 tablets as needed every 4 to 6 hours
4 pm	1,000 mg	
12 am	1,000 mg	

- **Acetaminophen is the base of your pain control.** Oxycodone is only for pain that breaks through.
- Tell us if you have a history of stomach ulcers, GI bleeding, kidney problems, or an NSAID allergy.
- Do not drive or drink alcohol while taking oxycodone.
- All medications are sent to your pharmacy. Pick them up before your surgery date or after surgery.
- If you had a **nerve block**, your leg will feel heavy and numb for many hours, sometimes more than a day. **Start your pain medication before the numbing wears off**, because it usually goes from numb to painful quickly.



Weight Bearing, Splint, and Boot

- For the **first 3 weeks**, you will be in a **splint** with your toes pointed down. Do **not** put any weight on the foot, not even your toes. Use your crutches at all times.
- At your **3-week visit**, the splint comes off and you move into a **boot with heel wedges**. The boot starts with **4 wedges**, and one wedge is removed **each week** until your foot is flat (neutral) at about **7 weeks**.
- From **3 weeks**, you may put **partial weight** on the foot in the boot, using crutches. Do **not** put full weight on it until **6 weeks**.
- From **8 weeks**, you will stop the boot and move into a supportive shoe, at first with a **heel lift**.



Splint and Showering

- Keep the splint on, clean, and dry until it is removed at your 3-week visit. Do not take it off or put anything inside it.
- To shower, cover the splint with a plastic bag or cast cover and keep it out of the water. Sponge bathing is also fine.
- Once the incision is uncovered, clean around it with soap and water only. Do not put alcohol, lotion, ointment, or Neosporin on the incision.
- Do not soak the incision in a bath, pool, or hot tub until it is fully healed, usually **4 to 6 weeks** after surgery.
- Call us if the splint feels too tight, gets wet, or if your toes become numb, cold, or change color.



Icing and Elevation

- Keep the foot raised **above the level of your heart** as much as possible, especially for the **first few days**. This is the most important way to control swelling.
- Ice at least **4 times a day for 20 minutes at a time**, especially for the **first 3 days**. Always keep a towel or cloth between the ice and your skin.
- Cold therapy unit: use as directed.



Physical Therapy

- Formal therapy begins at about **3 weeks**, once you are in the boot. Do your home exercises until then. After therapy starts, you can always continue your home program under your therapist's supervision.
- You may go to any therapy clinic that is convenient for you. Book prior to surgery or as early as possible, and call to confirm your appointment.
- Bring the therapy protocol for your therapist.



Motions to Avoid

- No weight at all on the foot for the **first 3 weeks**, and no full weight until **6 weeks**.
- Do not stretch the ankle upward (toes toward your shin) beyond what the boot allows. From **8 weeks**, stretching is gentle only, **nothing forceful**.
- No calf raises, squats, or lunges until about **3 months**.
- No jogging, running, or jumping until about **6 months**.
- Return to full sport is around **8 to 9 months**, once you meet your rehab goals and Dr. Tummala clears you.



Home Exercises

- Start the **day after surgery**. Do these **3 to 4 times a day**, for **5 to 10 minutes** each session, while the splint is on. The ankle stays in the splint; these exercises move only the toes, knee, and hip.

EXERCISE	PICTURE	HOW TO DO IT
Elevate		Raise the leg whenever you are sitting or lying down, with the foot above the level of your heart. Rest the splint on pillows so there is no pressure on the back of the heel.
Toe curls and toe spreads	<i>Picture to come</i>	Curl your toes down, then spread them apart. Repeat. Move only your toes and keep the splint still.
Knee bending		Sit on the side of the bed with your good foot under the splint of the operated leg. Let the knee bend down, supported by the good leg, then use the good leg to lift it back to straight. Repeat.
Straight leg raises	<i>Picture to come</i>	Lie on your back with the other knee bent. Tighten the thigh of the operated leg, keep it straight, and lift it about a foot off the bed. Hold, lower slowly, and repeat.



Activity

- Alternate sitting, reclining, and lying down as you can tolerate. Get up and move around regularly during the day.
- A stationary bike may be added at about **6 weeks** in the boot, pushing with the **heel only**. Biking in a shoe and swimming come at about **8 to 12 weeks**, as your therapist directs.



Driving

- Not until you are out of the splint or boot and off crutches, off narcotic pain medication, and able to control the car comfortably, including an emergency stop.
- If you are at all unsure whether you are safe to drive, do not for your safety.



Work

- Desk work is often possible within **1 to 2 weeks**, once you are comfortable on crutches.
- Physical or manual work often takes about **4 to 6 months**, depending on the labor involved, and is cleared by Dr. Tummala.



Follow-Up

- Your first visit is about **3 weeks after surgery** and should be scheduled before surgery. The splint comes off, the stitches are removed, and you move into the boot at this visit.
- Further visits are typically at about **6 weeks, 3 months, and 6 months**.



- This handout is for education only and does not replace medical advice. Always follow the instructions Dr. Tummala and the care team give you for your specific situation.*