

# Dr. Matthew L. Hansen, MD

*Sports Medicine and Shoulder Specialist*

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## POST-OPERATIVE EDUCATION: ANKLE SURGERY

**WEIGHT BEARING & BRACE:** This is dependent on the procedure performed:

**Ligament Repair:** You will be placed in a splint in the operating room. You should keep this clean, dry and do not remove until your clinic follow-up. You will use a walker or crutches, and should be strictly non-weight bearing. You should elevate your foot to your heart level or above frequently to help reduce swelling.

### MOVING YOUR ANKLE:

If you are in a soft dressing, it is OK for you to start moving your ankle gently right away under your own power without any resistance. You will be referred for physical therapy, as this is important for full recovery. Advancement of your motion, including physical therapy, will be discussed at your first postoperative visit.

### LEG EXERCISES:

You may start doing straight leg lifts right away. While lying in bed, simply keep your leg straight and lift it off of the bed. Hold it up for a count of 5. Do this 10 times, and repeat three times a day. It will be difficult at first, but don't give up, even just flexing your quad muscle without lifting your leg is helping make your leg stronger. You may start doing knee extensions at the edge of your bed as comfort allows.

### ICE:

Please note that with the dressings placed during surgery, you may notice decreased benefit from the ice. Often placing the ice adjacent to the surgical site increases the effectiveness. Use as needed and if you notice benefit. See the next section for suggestions to make the ice more beneficial. Ice is most helpful in the first 3 days after surgery, but may help up to 2 weeks after surgery. We do not recommend that you use heat, as this can increase swelling.

You may use a commercially available ice bag or fill a large plastic bag with ice and water. (Do not place a plastic bag directly on your skin, rather place a towel on your shoulder in between your skin and the ice bag.) You can ice your shoulder 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off throughout the day. Do not ice an area longer than 30 minutes at a time, as this can cause frost bite.

## **BANDAGES:**

If you have a hard splint, keep it clean and dry and do not remove it until your clinic follow up. It is OK to get your incisions wet after the bandage is removed, but it is very important not to soak the incision underwater (no bath, pool, hot tub etc.) for 3 weeks. It is OK to wash the incisions gently with soap and gently pat dry with a towel. Do not place any lotion or other ointment on your incisions. A snug - but not overly tight - ACE wrap may help control swelling.

## **MEDICATIONS:**

Narcotic pain medicine (such as Oxycontin – long-acting oxycodone, Percocet – oxycodone, Norco – hydrocodone, or Tylenol#3 - Codeine): We will prescribe a different medication if you cannot take these. Take this AS NEEDED only. Do not take additional Tylenol (also called acetaminophen) with these medicines, as they already have Tylenol in them. You may SUBSTITUTE Tylenol for a narcotic pill if you choose to. Be certain that you do not exceed the maximum Tylenol dose as noted on the Tylenol bottle.

Zofran (ondansetron): You may take this medication if you are having nausea or vomiting.

Robaxin (methocarbamol): This muscle relaxer may help with spasms experienced commonly after ankle surgery.

Stool softener: Pain medicines often cause constipation. It is best to take most of this medicine with some food, as it can cause a little stomach upset.

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ONLY if no tendon or ligament repair was performed: It is OK to take over-the-counter NSAIDs (Ibuprofen, Motrin, Advil, Naproxen, Aleve etc...) along with your pain medicine to increase the pain relief. You may take UP TO 4 Advil (800mg Ibuprofen) THREE times a day. You may take UP TO 2 Aleve twice a day.

## **FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS:**

You should have a **follow-up appointment** with your surgeon in about 2 weeks. You may also have an additional visit with the Physician Assistant within a few days of your surgery. Call (480) 964-2908 right away if you do not have an appointment already scheduled. We will check your incisions and remove any sutures at the 2-week visit. We will also answer any specific questions you may have about your surgery. You will be referred for Physical Therapy if this has not been arranged, as many patients benefit from PT after ankle surgery.

**CALL OUR OFFICE** at (480) 964-2908 with any urgent or emergent questions or concerns that you may have, or if you develop swelling in your leg with calf pain, swelling that will not go away when you elevate your leg, a temperature above 101.4, or drainage from your incisions.

If you experience high fever (above 102.5), chest pain, difficulty breathing, fainting: go to an **Emergency Department** close to your house.