

**Orthopaedic and Spine Institute
21 Spurs Lane, Suite 245, San Antonio, TX 78240**

www.saspine.com

Tel# 210-487-7463

Joel B. Nilsson, M.D., P.A.

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR ARTHROSCOPIC MICROFRACTURE OF THE ANKLE

ICE:

Use it **as often as you can** for the first 3 days. Ice bags/packs should be used for 20 to 30 min every 3 to 4 hrs during waking hours (minimum of 8 hrs/day). Placing the ice right over the front of the ankle will help to decrease the swelling. Be sure not to let the dressing get too wet.

ELEVATION:

Keep your leg elevated whenever possible. The primary goal during the first week post-op is to minimize swelling in your ankle and foot. You are not allowed to put any weight on the foot for 4 weeks. When sitting or laying down, try to have your foot elevated **higher than the level of your heart.** Placing pillows or rolled sheets underneath your leg will help facilitate this.

DRESSING:

Please remove the dressing 3 days after surgery. You may get the small incisions wet in the shower but please do not submerge the incision completely in the tub or pool.

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BATHING:

Do not bathe, soak the ankle, or use hot tubs. After your wound has been checked at your first post-op appointment you will be told when you may begin **bathing**. In the meantime getting the incisions wet in the shower is OK.

BRACE /SPLINT:

A splint may be applied for the first 3 days to help with immediate postoperative pain, but this should be removed along with the dressing at the 3 day mark after surgery. Adhesive strips if used, should be left in place.

CRUTCHES:

You should use your crutches at all times when walking in order to put no weight on the operative foot/ankle. While walking, you may allow your toes to touch the ground for balance, but the majority of your weight should be placed on the leg that was not just operated on. Doing this is often difficult, and the crutches are to help prevent you from falling and injuring yourself. It will be necessary to use crutches and restrict any weight-bearing on the operated leg for the first 4 weeks after surgery to allow the micro-fractured area in your ankle to heal before putting too

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much force on it. Otherwise, you may be at risk for persistent pain and failure of the procedure.

MOTION EXERCISES:

You should perform ankle ABC exercises 5 times daily for the first 4 weeks after surgery. Further activity restrictions will be guided by your specific **PT protocol** which your therapist will also discuss with you and which we will begin at your 2 week follow up. You should consider icing your ankle after doing your exercises particularly if you have swelling.

PHYSICAL THERAPY:

You will not need outpatient PT until you are seen at your 2 week postop visit. When you return for your first follow-up appointment, you will be given a **physical therapy consultation and protocol**. You should bring these with you to your first therapy appointment.

MEDICATION: You will have a prescription(s) for pain medication to take home with you. Usually this consists of a **short, 5-day supply of a mild narcotic-based pain medicine**. You may discontinue this medication as soon as you would like.

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FOLLOW-UP: You should have an appointment to see your surgeon **10-14 days** after surgery. You will **need to call** the clinic front desk to schedule your appointment and/or verify the date and time.

DRIVING:

Do not drive until you have been re-evaluated at your first post-op visit. You will be told when you can begin driving based on your strength and range of motion.

Other precautions: If you develop a fever (temperature greater than 101 F or 38.3 C) or chills, or symptoms such as unexpected pain, redness, swelling in either leg, rash, blisters, numbness, tingling, itching, hives or shortness of breath, please contact our office. Problems following this type of surgery have been minimal; however, if you have a problem or questions, do not hesitate to call the office. The answering service will handle your call to the office after hours or on the weekend, and one of the Spine and Orthopedic Institute clinicians will return your call. **If you have an emergency, call 911.**