

After surgery on a broken ankle: plate and screws

After surgery on a broken bone



Count the weeks from the day of your operation. The date is on your discharge card.

If your doctor wrote a different plan on your prescription, follow that instead of this page.

Weeks 0–2

Bring the swelling down: keep the ankle above the level of the hip most of the day. Keep the plaster or boot on and dry. Keep the toes, knee and hip moving. If we prescribed blood-thinning injections or tablets, take every dose.

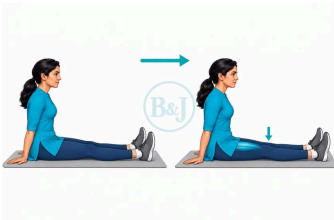
Weight bearing As written on your prescription. Use the walker or crutches every time.

Toe wiggles

Curl the toes down, then spread them and pull them up, as far as the plaster allows.

10 times

Every hour while awake



Quad sets

Sit with the leg straight. Press the back of the knee down and tighten the thigh.

Hold 5 seconds

10 times

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**

The thigh muscle tightening

✗ **Should not feel**

Knee pain



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Straight leg raise

Lie down, one knee bent. Keep the other knee straight and lift the leg 20 cm.

10 times

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**

The thigh working

✗ **Should not feel**

The knee bending or back pain



Buttock squeeze

Lie on your back with the legs straight. Squeeze the buttocks together, hold, then relax.

Hold 5 seconds

10 times

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**

The buttocks tightening

✗ **Should not feel**

Back pain



Lying hip slide out

Lie on your back, legs straight, toes pointing up. Slide the leg out to the side and back, keeping the knee straight.

10 times

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**

The side of the hip working

✗ **Should not feel**

The toes rolling outwards

Not yet Letting the leg hang down for long, walking on the operated leg unless we have allowed it, getting the plaster or the wound wet, or driving.

Move to the next stage only after we have seen you, and the X-ray if one was planned.



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Weeks 2–6

Stitches out. If we have moved you into a removable boot, take it off to exercise the ankle and to wash, and wear it to walk. Carry on with the earlier exercises.

Weight bearing As written on your prescription. It increases as the X-ray shows healing.



Ankle pumps

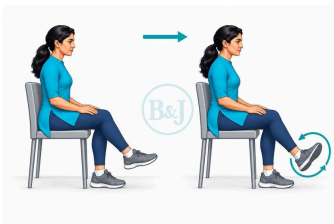
Pump the feet up and down to keep the blood moving.

20 times

Every hour while awake

✓ **Should feel**
The calf working

✗ **Should not feel**
Calf pain or swelling — tell us



Ankle circles

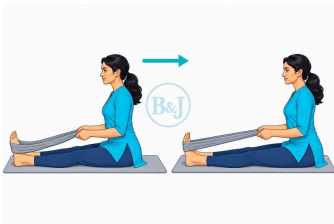
Move the ankle slowly in circles both ways.

10 each way

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**
The ankle loosening

✗ **Should not feel**
Sharp pain



Towel calf stretch, sitting

Sit with the leg straight. Loop a towel round the ball of the foot and pull the toes towards you.

Hold 30 seconds

3 times

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**
A stretch in the calf

✗ **Should not feel**
Sharp pain



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Sitting heel and toe raises

Sit with both feet flat on the floor. Lift the heels, lower them, then lift the toes.

10 times

3 times a day

✓ Should feel

The calf and the front of the shin working

✗ Should not feel

Sharp pain

Not yet Walking without the boot, running or jumping.

Move to the next stage only after we have seen you, and the X-ray if one was planned.



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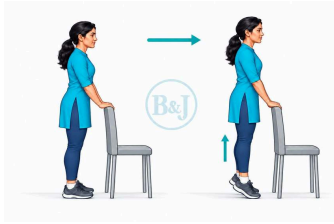
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Weeks 6–12

Out of the boot as we advise. Walk without a limp; build calf strength and balance. Ankle swelling by evening is normal and can last for some months. Carry on with the earlier exercises.

Weight bearing Full, unless we have told you otherwise.



Calf raises

Rise onto both toes and lower under control.

15 times

Daily

✓ **Should feel**
The calf working

✗ **Should not feel**
Sharp pain



Calf stretch, knee straight

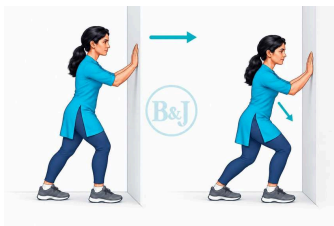
Hands on a wall, back leg straight, heel down.

Hold 30 seconds

3 times

✓ **Should feel**
A stretch in the upper calf

✗ **Should not feel**
Pain in the heel



Calf stretch, knee bent

The same position but bend the back knee slightly.

Hold 30 seconds

3 times

✓ **Should feel**
A stretch lower down

✗ **Should not feel**
Sharp pain



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Single-leg balance

Stand on one leg beside a worktop. Balance prevents falls, and preventing falls prevents fractures.

30 seconds

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**

Working to stay steady

✗ **Should not feel**

Losing balance — hold on



Heel-to-toe walking

Walk heel to toe along a line, beside a support.

10 steps

Daily

✓ **Should feel**

Steadier walking

✗ **Should not feel**

Wobbling — use the wall



Towel toe curls

Scrunch a towel with the toes.

10 times

Daily

✓ **Should feel**

The foot muscles working

✗ **Should not feel**

Cramp

Not yet Running, jumping or heavy manual work.

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Week 12 onwards

Back to work and sport, as the X-ray shows. Carry on with the third-stage exercises.

Weight bearing Full.



Step-up

Hold a rail. Step up onto a low step with the operated leg, then step down with the other leg.

10 times

Daily

✓ Should feel

The thigh working

✗ Should not feel

The knee falling inwards



Static cycling

Set the seat high, so the knee is almost straight at the bottom. Pedal gently with little resistance.

10 minutes

Daily

✓ Should feel

The knee moving freely

✗ Should not feel

Pain in the knee or hip

Not yet Contact sport until we clear you.

Stop and telephone us if

- Sudden breathlessness or chest pain — go to the nearest hospital
- Pain that keeps getting worse despite the painkillers, or is much worse when you move the toes
- The foot becomes numb, cold, pale or blue
- The calf becomes swollen, tight or painful
- Wound redness, discharge or fever
- The plaster or boot feels too tight, or rubs in one spot
- A new snap, or the ankle gives way



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