Aaron Wey MD, FAAOS, FACS
Adult & Pediatric Spine Surgeon
Complex & Comprehensive Spine Surgery

Aaron Wey, MD, FAAOS, FACS
870 Palisade Ave, Suite 205, Teaneck, NJ 07666
Tel (201) 836-1663 - Fax (201) 836-5729
aaronweymd.com

Ankle Arthroscopy

November 1, 2026

This is the rehabilitation plan I ask your physical therapist to follow after your Ankle Arthroscopy. Bring it to your first therapy visit. It is a framework, not a prescription: your therapist adjusts the pace to how you are healing, and anything we discussed in the office takes precedence over what is printed here. If something on this page does not match what we talked about, ask me.

Operation	Ankle Arthroscopy
Physical therapist	Please send progress notes to the office and call with any question about the plan.

Days 1-10

EXERCISES

- L & U Splint - Watch for skin breakdown
- Crutches - non weight bearing (NWB)
- AROM hip and knee
- Wiggle toes
- Straight leg raise (SLR) x 4
- Short arc quad (SAQ)
- Upper body exercises (seated or bench only - no pushups)
- LE stretches - Hamstring, quads, ITB, Hip flexors
- Ice and Elevation

GOALS

- Pain management
- Prevent swelling

Days 10-21

EXERCISES

- Crutches - weight bearing as tolerated (WBAT), D/C when gait is normal
- Continue appropriate previous exercises
- Calf pumping, alphabet, rotations
- Light Theraband ex x 4
- Towel crunches and side-to-side
- Seated BAPS, progress to double leg in standing
- Stationary bike
- Gastroc/Soleus Stretching
- Ice as needed

GOALS

- Full range of motion (ROM)
- Normal gait

Weeks 3-6

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Ankle Arthroscopy (continued)

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EXERCISES

- Continue appropriate previous exercises
- Theraband ex x 4 - Gradually increase resistance
- Elgin
- Steamboats (Theraband x 4 while standing on involved LE)
- Mini-squats, Wall squats, Total gym
- Double leg heel raises - Progress to single leg heel raises
- Single leg BAPS, ball toss, and body blade
- Forward, retro and lateral step downs
- Knee extension and HS curl weight machines
- Proprioception ex - Single leg BAPS, ball toss, body blade
- Treadmill - Walking forwards and backwards
- Elliptical trainer
- Pool therapy - Chest or shoulder deep water running

GOALS

- Normal strength

Weeks 6-8

EXERCISES

- Continue appropriate previous exercises
- Leg press and hip weight machine
- Fitter, slide board
- Push-up progression
- Sit-up progression
- Treadmill - Walking progression program
- Stairmaster
- Pool therapy - Unrestricted

GOALS

- Walk 2 miles at 15 min/mile pace

Months 2-4

EXERCISES

- Continue appropriate previous exercises
- Running progression program
- Agility drills / Plyometrics
- Transition to home / gym program

GOALS

- Return to all activities
- Pass a return-to-sport / fitness test at 4 months post-op

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Ankle Arthroscopy (continued)

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Abbreviations

AROM / AAROM / PROM: active / active-assisted / passive range of motion. ROM: range of motion. ER / IR: external / internal rotation. ABD / ADD: abduction / adduction (away from / toward the midline). FLEX / EXT: flexion / extension. WBAT / PWB / TTWB / NWB: weight bearing as tolerated / partial / toe-touch / non-weight bearing. SLR: straight leg raise. HS: hamstrings. ITB: iliotibial band. UE / LE: upper / lower extremity. UBE: upper body ergometer (arm bike). BAPS: balance board. BFR: blood flow restriction training. PREs: progressive resistance exercises. D/C: discontinue. prn: as needed. POD: post-operative day. TENS: transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation. ADLs: activities of daily living.

Source

Adapted from William Beaumont Army Medical Center, Physical Therapy Section, "Ankle Arthroscopy WB08", Revised August 2008, published by William Beaumont Army Medical Center at https://william-beaumont.tricare.mil/Health-Services/Hospital-Care-Surgery/Post-Operative-Rehabilitation-Protocols (a work of the U.S. Government in the public domain).

Scan for the current version of this protocol, and the others, at aaronweymd.com/post-op-protocols
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