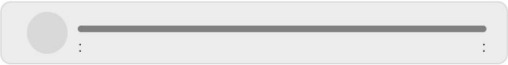


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Updated on November 4, 2025

Ankle Surgery: What to Expect During Recovery

Ankle surgery can sound intimidating—but knowing what to expect makes recovery smoother. Summit Orthopaedics shares what happens before, during, and after ankle surgery to help you heal with confidence.

[Ankle](#) [Download Article PDF](#)

So, you've hurt your ankle and were told you need surgery. Learning you need ankle surgery is often difficult news to get, but after the surgery and recovery, you will be grateful you went through with it.

Surgery can be painful, and the recovery can seem long, but being educated on what will happen during the surgery and what you can do to make your recovery as easy as possible will make a huge difference.

Ankle surgery can be a challenging thing to go through because your ankle is utilized in so many daily activities. Your ankle is important to many hobbies and allows you to live your life in the way you would like to.

That is why if your ankle is causing severe pain or limits your day-to-day movements, it can be extremely frustrating.

Knowing what surgery will be like and what you are getting into for recovery will make this process easier.

Types of Ankle Surgery

Different types of ankle surgery are used to fix a lot of various injuries and pain. Your recovery will look different than other people's; this primarily depends on the type and severity of your ankle surgery. If you have specific questions about the recovery instructions for your surgery, ask one of our doctors or nurses. Our team can provide you with everything you need to know about your recovery.

A couple of [ankle conditions](#) that could require surgery include:

- [Ankle Sprain](#) (this is the most common ankle injury, some are mild, and some can be very severe)
- [Osteoarthritis](#)
- [Peroneal Tendon Problems](#)
- [Ankle Syndesmosis Injury](#)
- [Shin Splints](#)
- [Peroneal Tendon Subluxation](#)
- [Ankle Arthroscopy](#)
- [Artificial Joint Replacement of the Ankle](#)
- [Ankle Fusion](#)

Day of The Surgery

It is entirely normal to feel overwhelmed, scared or stressed on the day of your surgery. Our doctors at Summit Orthopedics are exceptionally good at what they do, and you are in great hands. Our top priority is patient care, and we want you to feel relaxed and safe.

On the day of your surgery, you will need someone to drive you home when the surgery is over. You will probably feel a little bit groggy from the anesthesia and may experience some discomfort. Having a support system in place is extremely important, especially on the day of your surgery.

You should also familiarize yourself with the post-operative instructions and ask your doctor or nurses any questions before heading home.

When you get home after the surgery, you will feel tired and experience pain around your ankle. You should immediately rest, elevate, and ice your ankle. Drink lots of fluids, eat food that is easy for your stomach to digest, and spend a lot of time relaxing (your body needs it).

Pro-tip: Stay on top of your pain medications. Getting behind (not taking the medication on time) can increase your pain, which can be hard to manage. From the beginning, place someone you trust in charge of your pain medications, and they can help you manage your ankle pain.

The First Week After Surgery

The first week of surgery may be challenging because there may be quite a bit of discomfort, and your daily activities are limited. This restriction in what you can do can take its toll mentally as well as physically. Staying positive and focusing on the good the surgery did on your ankle function can help you stay positive during this recovery period.

Following the surgery, you should plan on taking about two weeks off. You may be sore and tired, but taking this time off will allow your body to recover how it needs to.

You also need to be aware of and follow the post-operative instructions about your cast, bandages, and stitches. Don't pick at them, remove them, or irritate this area without instruction from your doctor. These things are in place to help you heal free of infections, and it is important that you obey these instructions.

During this first week, it is essential to eat a balanced diet and drink a lot of fluids. Eating lots of fiber will help your gastrointestinal tract (GI tract), especially after surgery. The anesthesia, as well as continued use of pain medications, can cause constipation and discomfort. Eating a balanced diet with lots of fluids will help minimize this risk.

The First Month

By the first month post-op, you will probably have had 1-2 appointments with your surgeon and the office. They may change the bandage/cast, remove stitches, and encourage you to start physical therapy.

Again, this is a general overview and may not be accurate for every type of ankle surgery done by any orthopedic surgeon. For specific details on your recovery, ask your doctor.

Hopefully, now, the pain is a lot better, and you are feeling more like yourself. Even though your pain and discomfort may be better, you still need to be incredibly careful and kind to your new ankle.

You will probably continue to do ankle range of motion stretches recommended by your physical therapist. These stretches help rehabilitate your ankle after surgery. You should also continue to regularly ice, elevate, and add compression to your ankle.

The acronym commonly used to help you remember how to deal with ankle pain and to help your ankle heal is RICE.

R- Rest

I- Ice

C- Compression

E- Elevate

3 Months Post Surgery

The type of ankle surgery you had will influence your recovery by three months post-op.

In general, you should expect to be still doing physical therapy heavily focused on [strengthening your ankle](#). Working hard during this time will help you see the best results continuing forward into your future.

You will also want to continually ice and elevate your ankle.

Going forward in your recovery will depend on the type of surgery you had. Some simpler procedures may be healed by now, while others will take months more to rehabilitate.

If you have more questions or are looking for specifics on your surgery, ask your doctor or one of our other knowledgeable team members, and they would be happy to answer your questions.

Complications to Be Aware Of



While we take every precaution we can, post-operative infections can occur. Some discomfort is to be expected after any surgery, but if your pain is severe and you cannot relieve it with ice, elevation, or medication, call us, and we would love to help.

Some other complications to be aware of include:

- A high fever (over 38.5°C or 101.3°F)
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chest pain
- Red, inflamed, or oozing incision site
- Adverse reactions to prescribed pain medication

These complications are rare, but they can happen. Being informed about possible complications going into surgery, and knowing what to look for post-surgery, can help you have more peace of mind. If you are concerned, never hesitate to call.

Now that you have a better idea of what your recovery will look like, we hope you feel excited about your future. If you have questions about your specific recovery, details about your ankle surgery, or are seeking a consultation for your ankle pain or lack of functionality, [call us](#) today to schedule an appointment with our friendly staff.



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