



MID COUNTY ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY AND SPORTS MEDICINE

Postoperative Course for Typical Osteotomies, Fusions and Flatfoot Reconstruction Office of Joshua P. Nadaud, MD

First 2 Weeks

- There is no weight bearing unless otherwise instructed by your physician.
- Depending on your preference and abilities, you will be using crutches, walker, roll-about and/or wheelchair. Some patients prefer to do crutch training with a physical therapist prior to surgery.
- Please keep the surgical limb dry and do not remove your surgical dressing. If the dressing is too tight you may loosen the dressing, but please call the office with your complaints prior to doing so.
- It is necessary to keep your leg elevated above your heart level as much as possible.
- Please contact the office at (314) 983-4700 to schedule your first postoperative visit, which is typically 5 to 7 days after your surgery. At that time, you can expect to have your post-op dressing/splint and sutures removed. You will be placed in a walking boot, brace or surgical shoe. If you have a boot at home, and it is in good shape, bring it with you to your visit.
- Notify us if there is increasing pain, fever, chills or if you feel sick like you have a virus or the flu, especially after the third postoperative day. During the first 3 days, the pain is typically the strongest and then you should observe the pain decreasing. Most patients will still have pain for 2 weeks following surgery that may require management with pain medications.

2 to 6 Weeks

- You may get your foot wet in a shower 1 day after the sutures are removed, and you may choose to bathe about 5 days after suture removal.
- You should not place any weight on your surgical limb unless otherwise instructed.
- Any time you are up and moving you should have your boot, brace or shoe on to protect the limb if you were to suffer a misstep or fall.

6 to 12 Weeks

- If your x-rays show healing, at 6 weeks you may begin to gradually and progressively increase your weight bearing in the brace. You may begin with 20 to 40 pounds and increase by 20 to 30 pounds every 3 to 5 days as tolerated. For instance, at 6 weeks you may begin partial weight bearing in the brace 20 to 40 pounds, in 3 to 5 days progress to 40 to 70 pounds, etc.
- If you experience a flare of swelling or pain it may be a sign that you are progressing too quickly and you may need to back off your activity temporarily and rest until you feel better. After this, you may progress with weight bearing.

- It is recommended that you use a bathroom scale to “learn” what 20 to 40 pounds of pressure feels like when you begin to partially weight bear. You should be in your boot or brace and place 20 to 40 pounds of pressure on your limb to get an idea of what this amount of weight feels like.
- Although it can vary from patient to patient, typically most are able to progress to full weight bearing as tolerated in the boot, brace or surgical shoe by twelve weeks.

At 12 Weeks

- Typically at 12 weeks you may begin to wean out of the boot, brace or shoe. We recommend that you begin weaning from the boot, etc. into a comfortable shoe, initially at home to provide a more stable, controlled environment.
- For the first week of weaning, spend 1 hour in a comfortable shoe in your home and then reapply the brace for 4 hours. If there is no increased pain then the shoe can be worn again for 1 hour. On day three of weaning, progressively increase your time in a shoe to 1.5 hours and then to 2 hours on day four or five and so on gradually increasing the duration of the shoe wear.
- You may benefit from use of a cane or a crutch when transitioning to provide additional support as you get used to walking out of the boot or brace.
- It is important that you progress into a comfortable shoe as tolerated. For instance if you notice an increase in pain and swelling, you may be progressing too quickly into a shoe.
- After 12 weeks, it is recommended that you bring your boot with you, particularly for more extended activities in case you experience a flare of symptoms such as pain or swelling. You may need to continue to use your boot or brace, although less and less, for 3 to 6 months following surgery.

Rate of Healing (in general)

- At 3 months you can expect to be 75% healed.
- At 6 months you can expect to be 90% healed.
- Full healing from surgery may take up to 1 to 1.5 years depending on the type of surgery. Swelling can be one of the last symptoms to linger but you should note progressive improvement during your recovery.

** It is important to note that these are general guidelines of a typical postoperative course and do not include factors that may complicate recovery that are specific to the individual patient.*