

Rehabilitation Protocol: Distal Fibula Open Reduction Internal Fixation

Phase I: 0-2 weeks

- Brace: Splint with ankle in neutral position
- ROM: none of ankle; okay for toe ROM
- Weightbearing: Non-weightbearing
- Strengthening: None

Phase II: 2-6 weeks

- Brace: Transition to walking boot full time except for during exercises and hygiene
- ROM: Active ROM of ankle only, emphasis on dorsiflexion
 - > Avoid passive inversion and eversion
 - > Avoid full range plantarflexion
- Weightbearing: Non-weightbearing
- Strengthening: intrinsic foot strengthening only; no ankle strengthening

earlier weightbearing may be allowed depending on fracture pattern/surgical details

Phase III: 6-8 weeks

- Brace: Walking boot - okay to remove for sleeping and exercises
- ROM: full dorsiflexion ROM, 75% plantarflexion without resistance
- Weightbearing: progress to WBAT in boot
- Strengthening/Exercises:
 - > Introduce proprioceptive exercises on even ground only
 - > Light soft tissue work
 - > Add lower extremity closed chain exercises in single plane

Phase IV: 8-12 weeks

- Brace: wean out of boot; lace up ankle brace in athletic shoes if having adequate strength and gait pattern
- ROM: full
- Weightbearing: WBAT
- Strengthening/Exercises:
 - > Maintain flexibility/ROM
 - > Same as Phase III

Phase V: 12-16 weeks

- Brace: none
- ROM: full
- Weightbearing: WBAT
- Strengthening/Exercises:
 - > Maintain flexibility/ROM
 - > Banded strengthening
 - > Progress closed chain exercises
 - > Progressive proprioceptive training

- > Static and dynamic balance on varied surfaces
- > Plyometrics

Phase VI:
16 weeks+

- Brace: none
- ROM: full
- Weightbearing: WBAT
- Strengthening/Exercises:
 - > initiate jogging/running
 - > progress plyometric program to dynamic, multi-planar exercises
 - > increase intensity and resistance on closed chain exercises
- Activity: return to activity
- Functional activities and sport-specific demands
- Return to sport after clearance by MD