

# Functional rehabilitation protocol for achilles tendon rupture using VacoPed boot

## Phase 1

### Goals

- **Protect tendon**
- **Minimise pain and swelling**

### 0-2 weeks

- NWB
- No physio or ROM
- VacoPed boot or backslab in 25-30° equinus
- Boot on at all times, including night
- Rest, elevate.

### 2-4 weeks

- Touch or partial WB
- Boot on at all times, except for hygiene
- Active dorsiflexion to neutral, with knee flexed, within pain limits
- No active plantarflexion
- No passive movements

## Phase 2

### Goals

- **Protect healing tendon**
- **Progress to FWB**
- **Regain ROM**

### 4-8 weeks

- Build to FWB in boot
- Boot on when mobilising
- Boot off at night after week 6
- Equinus reduced by 5° every week (aim for neutral by week 8)
- Active dorsiflexion until gentle tension felt in achilles
- Passive plantarflexion
- No passive dorsiflexion
- Hip and knee strengthening with boot on (exercise bicycle)

## Phase 3

### Goals

- **Full ankle ROM**
- **Gentle ankle strengthening**

### 8-12 weeks

- FWB in boot
- Boot on when mobilising (neutral ankle)
- Ankle passive and active ROM, avoiding excessive stretching
- Light resisted active plantar/dorsiflexion with knee flexed
- Resisted eversion/inversion

## Phase 4

### Goals

- **Ankle strengthening**
- **Gait restoration**

### 12-16 weeks

- Out of boot, may need small heel raise at first
- Active resisted plantar/dorsiflexion
- Passive calf stretches (avoid excessive tension)
- Eccentric stretches, not beyond neutral (i.e. not on edge of step)

## Phase 5

### Goals

- **Return to function**
- **Return to sport**

### 16 weeks +

- Eccentric calf exercises beyond neutral (i.e. on edge of step)
- Closed chain exercises
- Proprioceptive exercises

### 6 months +

- Eccentric exercises, strengthening
- Sport /work-specific / plyometric
- Return to sports 7-8 months