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Minimally Invasive Hallux Valgus (Bunion) Correction Post Operative Rehabilitation Protocol

Operative Summary

A surgical correction to straighten the toe is performed by cutting the bone with a small burr, shifting it, then fixing the bone with screws. This will be performed under an ankle anaesthetic block, numbing the entire foot. A general anaesthetic or sedation may also be used, according to your preference.

Day of Operation (week 1)

Strict elevation

Rigid post-operative sandal - mobilise full weight bearing (with 2 crutches only if needed)

Home the same day

Some bleeding may to be seen through bandage, (this is normal)

Move toes, ankle, knee and hip

Regular (3-4 times/day) pain relief (Codeine and Diclofenac) once discomfort begins (after ankle anaesthetic block wears off, approximately 6-12 hours after surgery)

Weeks 1 – 2 Post Operatively

Day 3 - Start Rehabilitation Exercises (see below)

Strict elevation at the level of the chest, for 23 hours a day for 7 days (for pain relief, swelling and wound healing)

Regular (3-4 times/day) pain relief (Codeine and Diclofenac) only if needed

Full weight bearing in post operative sandal (can be removed at night if desired, but put back on when walking)

Sleep with leg on 2 pillows

Keep bandage on and keep dry. You may use a 'cast / bandage protector for bathing', available on-line

Ice for 10 minutes every hour, on top of bandage

Move toes, ankle, knee and hip

Straight leg raises

Week 3 Post Operatively (after 2 weeks completed)

Clinic review by Mr Gordon - Bandage and steristrips removed, wound inspected, (no stitches need removing usually)

Continue elevation at the level of the heart when not walking, especially at the end of the day or if swelling

Continue Rehabilitation Exercises (see below, 5 times / day)

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Week 6

Outpatient visit - Pain, swelling and movement assessed

Post operative sandal removed and normal shoe worn (will need to be a generous fit).

Continue rehabilitation exercises

Month 3-6

Outpatient visit as required - Pain, swelling and movement assessed.

Shoe fitted reviewed

Continue rehabilitation exercises

Big Toe Joint Rehabilitation Exercises : Aim – To restore big toe joint movements

After 3 Days Post Operatively (5 times / day)

Remove post operative sandal, bandage kept on.

1. Toe lifts x 20: Sit with foot flat on floor, raise toe as far as possible to ceiling and return
2. Toe bends x 20: Sit with toes resting over the edge of a thick book, bend toes towards the floor
3. Toe pulls x 20: Pull toe up with hand to discomfort and hold for 3 seconds, relax
4. Toe pushes x 20: Point ankle and toes down (like a ballerina), push toe down with hand to discomfort and hold for 3 seconds, relax

After 1 Week Post Operatively (5 times / day)

5. Seated heel raises x 20: Sit with foot flat on floor, knees bent 90° keeping toes on floor, raise heel to the limit of pain and return

After 4 weeks Post Operatively (5 times / day)

6. Standing both heel raises x 20: Stand close to a wall for balance, raise heels to the limit of toe pain and hold for 3 seconds
7. Standing single heel raises x 20: Stand close to a wall for balance, stand on one leg, raise heel to the limit of toe pain and hold for 3 seconds
8. Standing lunge x 20: Place operated foot 1 step behind you, bend both knees, concentrating on bending the toe and hold for 3 seconds
9. Continue exercise 4-8

Ankle and Calf Exercises : Aim – To maintain muscle tone, strength and mobility

Ankle and Calf: ankle plantar flexion (tip toe position) and dorsiflexion (bring foot up), strengthening of the peroneal muscles (bring foot out to the side)

Gait training: Optimise load distribution for the whole foot focusing on weight bearing of the first MTP (big toe) joint and hallux (big toe)

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Returning to Work

Sedentary jobs: Return after 2 weeks, if able to maintain foot elevated at level of waist, otherwise 4 weeks off

Standing/walking jobs: Return after 6 weeks, but may be sooner depending on comfort and swelling

Manual/labouring jobs: Return after 8 weeks, but may be sooner depending on comfort and swelling

Driving

You need to be able to control the vehicle in an emergency. Can you stamp your foot down on the ground? For left sided surgery and no clutch is required, driving is probably safe at 2 weeks post operatively. For right sided surgery, driving is probably safe at 6 weeks post operatively, once in a normal shoe. If you are unsure, please ask Mr Gordon.

References

Postoperative Rehabilitation after Hallux Valgus Surgery: A literature review, Polastri, The Foot and Ankle Online Journal 4 (6): 4 2011

Rehabilitation After Hallux Valgus Surgery: Bearing of the First Ray During the Stance Phase Importance of Physical Therapy to Restore Weight, Schuh et al, PHYS THER. 2009; 89:934-945