

Ankle Arthroscopy

INTRODUCTION

Arthroscopy is keyhole surgery to access the inside of the ankle joint. Arthroscopy is a very useful way to evaluate the joint surfaces, and treat cartilage damage, scar tissue, spurs and impingement of the ankle.

THE SURGERY

Ankle arthroscopy surgery involves a number of steps:

- General anaesthetic and IV antibiotics
- Tourniquet around the thigh
- Two small incisions (~6mm) over front of ankle
- Insertion of arthroscope (camera) and keyhole surgery instruments to clean up ankle joint
- Closure of incisions with sutures
- Local anaesthetic block

GUIDELINES FOR POST-OP RECOVERY

HOSPITAL ADMISSION

- Most patients go home on the day of surgery

FIRST WEEK

- Elevate foot and rest
- Full weightbearing as tolerated in surgical shoe
- Crutches for balance and support
- Dressings to stay dry and intact
- Strong painkillers as required

WEEK 2

- Debulk outer bandages, leaving waterproof dressings in place on front of ankle (replace as necessary)
- Keep incisions dry
- Tubigrip bandage over ankle
- Transition to normal supportive gym shoes
- Crutches for balance and support if needed
- Commence ankle flexion/extension exercises
- Elevate foot when not walking

2 WEEK POST-OP APPOINTMENT

- Review by nurse & removal of dressings and sutures

WEEKS 3-6

- Daily scar massage from 3 weeks post-op
- Physiotherapy review (arrange first appointment for 2-5 days after the 2-week post-op check)
- **PHYSIOTHERAPY:**
 - Ankle and foot ROM exercises
 - Ankle stability and proprioception exercises
 - Gait re-training
 - Stationary bicycle, swimming
 - General upper body, core, hip and knee strength & conditioning

6 WEEK POST-OP APPOINTMENT

- Review by Dr Zilko

FROM 6 WEEKS

- **PHYSIOTHERAPY:**
 - Continue as above
 - Elliptical trainer
 - Return to light jogging from 6-9 weeks and progress
 - Work-specific or sport-specific training

Full recovery is usually up to 3 months, depending on pathology.

Every patient's recovery is individual and depends on the severity of the injury/disease and complexity of the surgery.