



Ankle Arthroscopy

What is ankle arthroscopy?

Ankle arthroscopy is key-hole surgery or minimally invasive surgery into the ankle joint using a special instrument containing a camera.

Why is it performed?

An ankle arthroscopy is performed for a variety of conditions affecting the ankle.

What does the operation involve?

The operation is done under general anaesthetic as a day case. The operation itself involves making two small incisions over the ankle joint and inserting a probe with a camera to look at the inside of the joint and to carry out any necessary surgery.

What about pain?

Whilst you are in hospital you will be monitored and the medical staff will give you painkillers as required and prescribed. When you are at home you may find Paracetamol or Ibuprofen useful for controlling any pain. Instructions on management of pain will be given by the nursing staff before you leave the hospital.

How long does recovery take?

Most patients who have had ankle arthroscopy take between 7-14 days to recover. There will be a padded dressing and bandage over the ankle joint but you should be able to walk after the operation. In certain cases a temporary cast is necessary for 7-10 days, followed by a walking boot for four weeks. Occasionally crutches will be necessary for a few weeks. Your surgeon will discuss this with you.

Swelling is quite common after foot and ankle surgery and this is best managed by elevating the foot at regular intervals. You are advised to elevate the operated ankle on a pillow every night and during the day to elevate the affected foot/ankle on three different occasions i.e. 11am, 3pm and 6pm for about one hour each time. The above measures will help to reduce swelling of the ankle. These instructions should be followed for at least 10-14 days.

Your wound dressing will be changed and stitches removed (if applicable) at the clinic during your follow up appointment, which is usually 7-10 days after the operation.

You should be able to wear normal shoes anytime after two weeks. When you are able to go back to driving will depend on the type of surgery you have and the surgeon will discuss this with you.

You are advised not to fly after surgery for about 6 weeks.

Swimming will be possible once the sutures are removed and the wound is healing satisfactorily.

When can I go back to work?

This will depend on the type of work you do. For example if you have a desk job you should be able to return to work after 48 hours. If on the other hand you do manual work where there would be a lot of pressure on the foot then you may need two to four weeks off work.



What about sport?

Your return to sport will depend on the damage to your ankle which caused you to have the arthroscopy in the first place and on any other necessary treatment. Your surgeon will advise as to the best course of action with regard to return to sport.

What can go wrong?

All operative interventions have an inbuilt risk and complication rate. The risks following arthroscopy to the ankle are as follows:

- Infection (the wound may become infected and inflamed)
- Bleeding into the joint
- Injury to a nerve resulting in numbness over the dorsum (top) of the foot
- Deep vein thrombosis (clot in a vein)
- Pulmonary embolus (clot in the lungs)
- Recurrence of symptoms
- Complex regional pain syndrome

The above complications are rare but can occur.

Your surgeon will be more than happy to discuss any issues related to your surgery.

