

ANKLE FUSION

(ARTHRODESIS)



WHAT IS ARTHRITIS?

Arthritis involves a loss of cartilage from the joint surfaces. Cartilage is a smooth, lubricating material that covers to ends of bones in joints, capable of withstanding the high forces of an active life.

Cartilage injuries will often result in arthritis, which presents itself through a number of symptoms, most notably pain. Other symptoms include swelling, stiffness, and cracking sounds within the joint. Arthritis worsens over time if left untreated.

THE PROCEDURE

Traditional methods include either an arthroscopic approach, or an open ankle approach.

WHAT IS ANKLE FUSION?

Ankle arthrodesis or ankle fusion is a popular option for the treatment of end-stage ankle arthritis. It involves surgical fusion of bones within the ankle joint. This eliminates some motion within the joint that is otherwise causing pain and discomfort. Ankle fusion allows the patient to weight bear and walk post-recovery. It is a simple and short procedure, that will help relieve pain. Patients typically spend around **12 weeks** in a cast, which is then removed given sufficient fusion has occurred. Patients may be required to wear a boot after surgery to assist with stability. Desired outcomes of surgery involving activity levels should be discussed with their surgeon. Whilst outcomes are typically successful in greater than **90%** of cases, it is important to note that mobility will be compromised.

The open approach will typically access the ankle from the front (anterior) or side (lateral) aspect of the ankle. Using screws and rods, the bones within the joint are fused.



AFTER YOUR SURGERY

After the procedure, patients are expected to remain in the hospital for 1-2 days. You are to remain non-weight bearing for 6 weeks, while using a Range of motion boot.

You can expect some pain and swelling following surgery. The leg will need to be kept elevated, and you will require oral pain medication. You will likely be examined at 1 week, 4 weeks, 6 weeks and 12 weeks, 6 months and 1 year post-operatively. After the initial 6 weeks, you will be able to begin weight-bearing in the boot (Dr Slater will advise this at your 6-week appointment). You will continue to wear the boot for approximately another 6 weeks.




WHO FUSION IS FOR?

Ankle arthrodesis is suitable for many patients with a variety of needs. Typical indications of a need for fusion include:

- Severe ankle pain that interferes with walking and standing
- Ankle deformity that interferes with shoes and normal walking patterns
- Ankle instability because of recurrent ankle sprain, failed ligament reconstruction or neurological issues.
- Failed total ankle replacement

Contact Us



 02 9020 7388

 admin@drsgordonslater.com.au

 www.orthopaedic-surgeon.com.au