

PHYSICAL THERAPY PROTOCOL — FOR THE TREATING THERAPIST

Ankle-Spanning External Fixator (Staged Pilon / Unstable Ankle)

Rehabilitation guideline — individualize per operative note and surgeon instruction · Questions: (513) 441-5639

PRECAUTIONS

- STRICT NWB; no ankle ROM (frame spans ankle).
- Daily pin-site surveillance and care teaching.
- Aggressive elevation/edema program — soft-tissue readiness gates definitive surgery.

PHASED PROGRESSION

Phase	WB / Protection	Goals & Interventions	Criteria to Progress
Frame period (0–3 wk)	NWB, frame on	Toe AROM, knee AROM (ipsilateral), quad/glute sets, UE conditioning, transfers, elevation	Soft tissues ready → definitive ORIF
After definitive ORIF	Per new operative note	Transition to ankle ORIF protocol (robertpettitmd.com/protocols/ankle-orif.html)	—

Timeframes are typical; radiographic healing and the operative note govern. DVT prophylaxis per surgeon (default aspirin 81 mg BID × 30 days). Report wound concerns, calf pain/swelling, fever, or neurovascular changes to the office same-day.



SCAN FOR THE LATEST VERSION ONLINE
robertpettitmd.com/pt-protocols/ankle-spanning-external-fixator.pdf
This handout is for general patient education and does not replace personalized medical advice. Always follow the specific instructions given by Dr. Pettit and your care team.