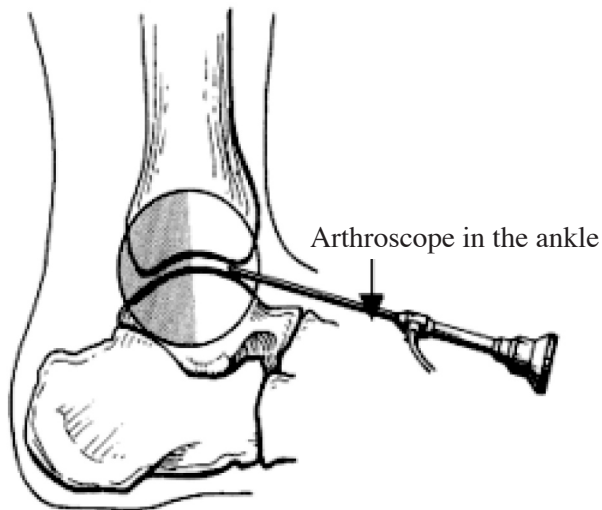


Arthroscopy



This is 'keyhole surgery', where a joint is visualised using a small (4.0mm or 2.7mm diameter) telescope (fiber optic camera) inserted through very small incisions called portals.

Using keyhole surgery a wide variety of procedures can be performed, from minor operations on cartilage to major joint reconstruction and fusion. This sort of surgery is commonly performed for chronic ankle symptoms following a sprain or injury. This is usually performed as outpatient or day surgery. It is usually performed through two small incisions at the front of the ankle (occasionally a further portal is required). Sometimes it is necessary to perform the operation through the back of the joint.

Sick Leave

In general, 1-2 weeks off work is required but this depends upon your occupation.

Driving

Driving is possible from 1 to 2 weeks following surgery if cleared by your surgeon. You must ensure that the ankle is sufficiently comfortable for safe operation of the pedals and you should inform your insurer before returning to driving. If in doubt wait until you are seen for removal of stitches before returning to driving.

Recovery Facts

- You can expect moderate discomfort for a few days.
- Your weight bearing status will be dependent upon what you had repaired.
- You may be provided with exercises to begin as soon as your wounds are stable.
- Crutches will be provided to assist you in walking initially.
- The bandages should be kept clean, dry and intact until you follow up with your surgeon. Sutures are usually removed at post op day 10-14.
- The wounds must be kept dry until the stitches are removed - showering/bathing still possible as long as dressings kept dry.
- Driving is possible from 1 to 2 weeks following surgery usually but you must ensure that the ankle is sufficiently comfortable for safe operation of the pedals and you should inform your insurer before returning to driving. If in doubt wait, discuss this with your surgeon.
- Your return to sports will depend on what was repaired. When cleared to return to sports, it is important to gradually increase your activity as your symptoms improve. Full return to sport would not be expected before six weeks following surgery.
- Some swelling may persist in the ankle for up to 3-12 months post surgery although usually this has resolved by six weeks following surgery.

Main Risks:

Nerve Damage - There are two small nerves (superficial peroneal and saphenous) either side of the ankle joint, near where the portal incisions are made. There is a small risk (5%) that one of these nerves is damaged. This will leave a patch of numbness over either the inside border of the foot or over the back of the foot. Usually this is temporary, but may be permanent.

Infection - Deep infection due to arthroscopic surgery is extremely unlikely. Published results show a risk of 1 in 300 or less. If this does happen, further surgery to wash out the joint will be needed, and a course of antibiotics. Minor wound infections are also rare, but can normally be treated with oral antibiotics.

Stiffness & Swelling - Arthroscopic surgery causes much less soft tissue trauma than traditional open surgery. As such, stiffness and swelling tends to settle more rapidly. In general, it is possible to walk on the joint immediately. There will be some discomfort mostly recovering in the first two weeks. Local anesthetic placed in the joint at the end of surgery is usually very effective in abolishing pain. By six weeks, one should be able to perform full activities unless otherwise instructed.