

After the surgery, the horse is maintained on stall rest, with a short course of NSAID drugs and gradually increasing hand walking over a 6 week period. At that point, a gradual return to work can commence.

Postoperative management includes stall rest with gradually increasing hand walking over a 6 week period, then conditioning for work may begin. If successful, the angle of the hoof is improved and is similar to the opposite hoof, and there is minimal dishing of the dorsal hoof wall. In most cases, there is minimal swelling or scarring at the incision site.

Postoperative fibroplasia occurring at the surgery site reunites the transected ends of the ligament with time. In selected cases, fibroplasia in that region is excessive and results in a cosmetically undesirable appearance. Cosmetically unacceptable results can occur from tendinitis that can be induced from exercise when the tendon has been protected by the contracted accessory ligament for a long time. Tendinitis can be avoided with longer periods of controlled exercise. Daily massage of the swelling can reduce the size.

Long-term follow-up of Standardbred foals treated with a desmotomy of the accessory ligament of the deep digital flexor tendon revealed that young foals (younger than 8 months at the time of surgery) could reach their athletic potential.<sup>55</sup> No foals treated after 8 months of age had a favorable outcome.

