

# [***Jets QB Aaron Rodgers is 'doing everything' at practice in his return from torn Achilles tendon***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C2X-YMD1-DYMD-651M-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

FLORHAM PARK, N.J. — Aaron Rodgers is throwing and, more importantly, running again — and officially putting [*his torn Achilles tendon*](https://apnews.com/article/aaron-rodgers-new-york-jets-2fcf29ffc02a439bbff0914cb1d2abdc) behind him.

The New York Jets quarterback has no limitations as he practices with the team during organized team activities, which began Monday.

“I feel really good,” the quarterback said Tuesday. “It’s just about the mental part. These practices have been nice the last couple of days, just to feel what it’s like to be out there, moving around and not be thinking about it and see how I respond the next day.

“This is the last part. The strength is good, the movement’s good. Just the confidence to do everything.”

The 40-year-old Rodgers [*tore his left Achilles tendon*](https://apnews.com/article/nfl-injuries-pro-football-47965f9e2ac80cff723216abe380766d) on the fourth snap of his debut with the Jets in the season opener against Buffalo last Sept. 11. He pushed his rehabilitation with the intention to return at the end of last season, but decided to forgo those plans when New York fell out of playoff contention and he was still not 100% healthy.

Rodgers focused instead on being fully ready for this season — and he appears well on track to do so.

“He’s doing everything,” said coach Robert Saleh, who added: "There’s no limitations to what we’re asking him to do at practice.”

Rodgers looked sharp and moved well Tuesday during non-contact team drills. Rodgers had a highlight-reel throw down the middle of the field to a well-covered Xavier Gipson that would have been a touchdown. He also connected a few times with leading receiver Garrett Wilson, including one that zipped through traffic for a short score.

While Rodgers was able to practice toward the end of last season, he acknowledged things feel a lot different now.

“Back then, I couldn't run. Or, run fast," he said. "I could move a little bit, but now I feel like I can do anything. I can run at top speed. It's just in those moments, the reaction's coming naturally.”

Rodgers' return has refueled optimism around the Jets, who were considered a playoff contender a year ago — with talk of a Super Bowl appearance suggested by the quarterback and his teammates.

New York, which has the NFL’s longest active playoff drought at 13 seasons, is again being mentioned among the teams considered a contender. And their quarterback is major reason.

“I have a lot of motivation,” Rodgers said. "I love the game, want to play at a high level. I don't want to go out, and I've said it before, as a bum. That's why I put the work in. I believe in my abilities. And you guys saw today, I mean, there's no pads on, but I can obviously still throw with the best of them. ... I look forward to my confidence in my ability to move getting back to where it was last year and going out and playing well."

The league's schedule makers think highly of the team, too, slotting the Jets for [*six night prime-time games*](https://apnews.com/article/nfl-schedule-chiefs-taylor-swift-f257f117ab001883fcb4cf6070a903d2) in the first 11 weeks. They'll also play an early morning national game in London against Minnesota in Week 5.

Mike North, the NFL’s vice president for broadcast planning, said last week, “I feel like the Jets kind of owe us one” after the team had five prime-time games scheduled and the league's first Black Friday game and Rodgers was hurt in Week 1.

“It's New York, there's always going to be excitement,” Saleh said. “It's awesome that we're looked at in that light. But at the same time, none of it matters unless we focus on the process, going day to day and try to do the best we can.”

Rodgers embraces the expectations for him and the team, but acknowledged “the heat is on everybody” — including him, his teammates and the coaching staff to perform well this season.

“I think if I don't do what I know I'm capable of doing, we're all probably going to be out of here,” he said. “I like that kind of pressure, though. I know it's a tough market to play in and it's not for everybody. I relish that opportunity.”

**QB OR VP?**

Rodgers said talk about him [*potentially being a vice presidential candidate*](https://apnews.com/article/robert-kennedy-rfk-rodgers-ventura-453c6078714b867f5af736ee8f97d8fe) for Robert Kennedy Jr. was “real,” but his heart remained set on football over ***politics***.

“I love Bobby,” Rodgers said. “We had a couple of really nice conversations. But there were really two options: It was retire and be his V.P. or keep playing. And I wanted to keep playing.”

Rodgers has been in the headlines other times during the past few months for various comments about ***politics***, vaccines, health care and conspiracy theories made during TV and podcast appearances. He stressed at the end of last season the team needs to eliminate outside distractions — a statement by which he still stands.

“Those were offseason things and those were real opportunities,” Rodgers said. “Once the season starts, it's all about football.”

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AP NFL: [*https://apnews.com/hub/NFL*](https://apnews.com/hub/NFL)

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