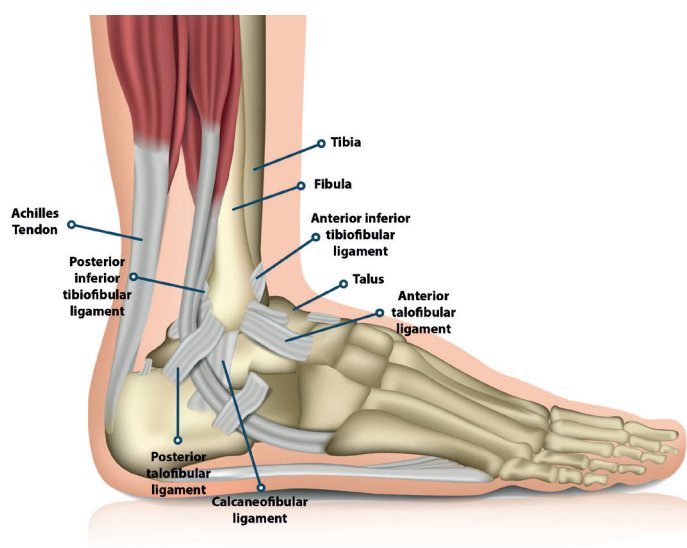


Acute Ankle Injury



What is an ankle injury?

The most common type of ankle injury is a sprain. A sprain occurs when you 'roll your ankle' or 'twist your ankle', which over-stretches the ligaments (the fibrous bands that support the ankle). Some people report hearing a "pop" or a "snapping" sound, followed by pain and swelling.

What are the symptoms?

When the ligaments in the ankle are injured, you can have swelling, pain and sometimes bruising. The pain is usually worst in the first couple of days after the injury. If needed, your doctor/healthcare provider may do an X-ray of the ankle to rule out injury to the bones.

Treatment

If you have pain, your doctor, healthcare provider or pharmacist may advise you on use of simple

pain relief (e.g. paracetamol). In addition to pain relief, the treatment below will help your recovery from an ankle sprain.

First aid for sprains

The most important initial treatment, in the first 48-72 hours, of an ankle sprain is based on the 'RICE' principles:

- **Relative Rest:** do not stop all activity but instead avoid activities that cause a moderate increase in your pain. When walking make sure that you walk as normally as possible. If you are unable to put weight on your leg you may need crutches (we will assess if this is appropriate for you).
- **Ice:** apply ice (e.g. ice cubes, frozen peas or ice pack) wrapped in a damp cloth and place over the affected area for 15-20 minutes, every one to two hours that you are awake. Never place ice directly onto the skin.
- **Compression:** If you are given a bandage or support, wear it during the day. Take the support off at night. Continue wearing the support until most of the swelling has gone down.
- **Elevation:** When resting, lift your foot up so it is above the level of your heart to help reduce swelling.



Avoid '**HARM**' in the first 48-72 hours, avoid:

- **Heat:** this increases the blood flow and swelling which can slow the healing process
- **Alcohol:** increases blood flow and swelling and can make you less aware of aggravating your injury.
- **Re-injury:** protect your ankle until it has healed properly.
- **Massage:** promotes blood flow and swelling which can increase the inflammation if started too soon after the injury.

What to Expect

Most people fully recover in one to six weeks depending on the severity of the injury. A physiotherapist will be able to assist in the rehabilitation and healing of an ankle injury. As the pain settles down after the first few days, gradually increase your level of activity.

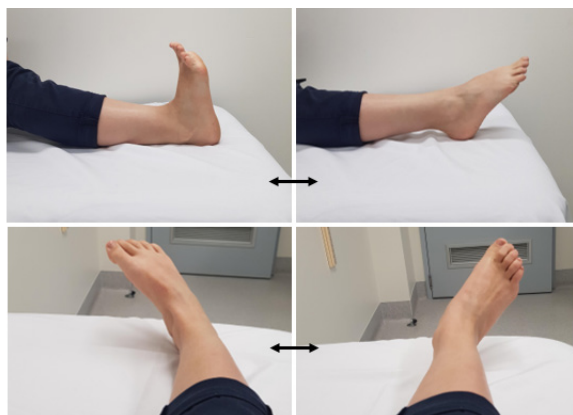
Exercises

It is important to maintain the flexibility and strength as you recover. Perform these exercises as instructed.

Ankle Range of Motion

With your leg relaxed, gently bend and straighten your ankle and move your foot in and out. Move through full range of motion as able avoiding pain.

Repeat ____ in each direction.



Calf stretches

1. Stand with the affected foot back, and leg straight. Keeping your heel on floor and turned slightly out-ward, gently lean into wall until the stretch is felt in your calf.

Hold ____ seconds.

2. Stand with both knees bent and the affected foot back. Keeping your heel on the floor, turned slightly outward, gently lean into wall until the stretch is felt in your lower calf.

Hold ____ seconds.



Prevention

There are simple measures you can take to reduce the risk of ankle sprains;

- Warm up before exercise and wear supportive foot wear (e.g. runners/ joggers)
- If you have hurt your ankle before you may benefit from a rehabilitation program and taping or bracing your ankle for sport.

When to seek further help

If after following this hand out for about two weeks, you are unable to put weight on it and your ankle remains painful and swollen with no improvement, please see your GP for further advice.

This information is intended as a general guide only. Should you have any concerns or questions please contact your doctor or physiotherapist.



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