

What Causes an Ankle Sprain?

Did you know that the ankle is one of the most common parts of the body to be sprained? Landing incorrectly on your foot can cause the ankle to roll. The incorrect landing can stretch or tear ligaments within the ankle. Once you have already had an ankle sprain, you may be more likely to sprain your ankle again.

Your doctor diagnoses an ankle sprain based on symptoms, clinical examination, and x-rays. X-rays may be ordered by your doctor to confirm the diagnosis or to exclude other problems.



Symptoms:

The symptoms may vary depending on the severity of the ligament damages, but usually include:

- Pain and swelling at the ankle
- Inability to bear weight
- Bruising that may extend into the lower foot and leg

Understanding Your Ankle Sprain

Treatment Options

Treatment options for ankle sprains include anti-inflammatory medication (as directed by the doctor), applying ice to the ankle, modification of activities, bracing and physical therapy. There are rarely any complications and symptoms generally resolve over time.

Medication

Taking anti-inflammatory medicine or NSAIDS (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) such as Motrin, Advil, Naproxen or Aleve as directed by your doctor may be helpful. This medication should be taken for 10 to 14 days to allow the medicine to build to therapeutic levels in the body. Taking the medication infrequently allows the medicine levels to drop, which decreases its effectiveness.

Icing

- Ice packs or ice massage can be applied to the ankle immediately after the injury for 15 minutes. This can be repeated every 30-45 minutes, several times a day.
- Ice massage is performed by filling several paper cups with water and placing them in a freezer. When frozen, the cup's rim is torn off to create a ice cone. The ice is then directly applied to the sore area until the area becomes numb.

Activity Modification

- Symptoms may be relieved by avoiding activities that cause the pain.

Immediately After The Injury

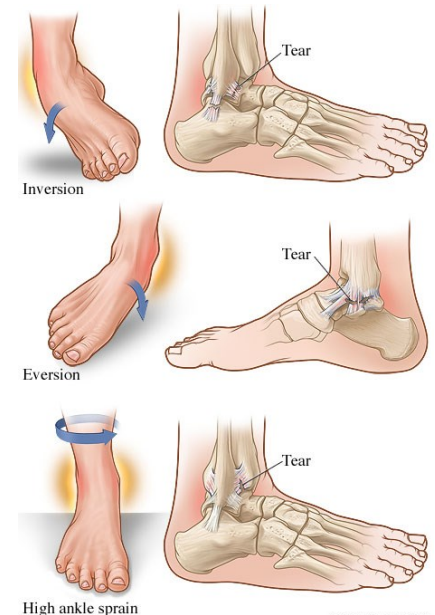
Rest: Stay off your ankle as much as possible. Crutches may be used.

Ice: Ice the ankle for 15 minutes at a time. Rest and remove the icepack for 30-45 minutes; then repeat. Continue icing for 3 days. The ice will help reduce swelling.

Compression: Another way to reduce the swelling and prevent further injuries is to keep the joint stable by wrapping it with an elastic ace bandage or having it splinted. This can be done by the Primary Care Physician, Emergency Room, or Walk-in Clinic.

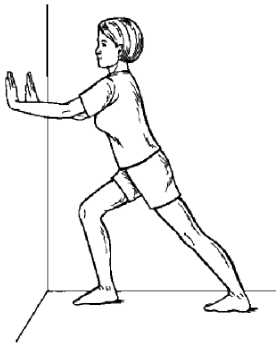
Elevation: Keep your ankle raised above your heart when you sit or lie down.

Types of Ankle Sprains



Ankle Exercises

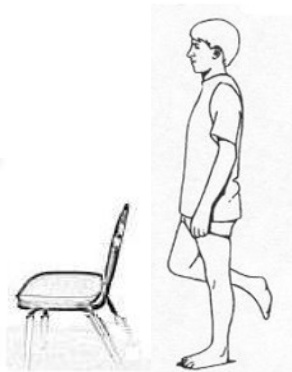
After about 2-3 weeks, you should start performing ankle exercises. Doing these exercises will help prevent future ankle sprains. Stretching should be performed in sets of 10, two times per day. Each stretch should be held for 10 seconds.



Calf Stretch



Ankle Circles



Balancing Exercise



Calf Raises

Jeffrey B. Neustadt, M.D.
Gregory V. Hahn, M.D.
Drew E. Warnick, M.D.
Paul L. Benfanti, M.D.
Lee G. Phillips, M.D.
Daniel C. Bland, M.D.
Ryan E. Fitzgerald, M.D.



625 6th Avenue South, Suite 450
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
Phone: (727) 898-2663 - Fax: (727) 568-6836

3440 West Dr. MLK Jr. Blvd, Suite 200
Tampa, FL 33607
Phone: (813) 879-2663 - Fax: (813) 872-0286

5881 Rand Blvd - Sarasota, FL 34238

4443 Rowan Road - New Port Richey, FL 34653

3850 Tampa Road - Palm Harbor, FL 34684

www.chortho.com



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