

Ankle Sprain

Causes –

Ankle sprains come about by rolling your ankle either inward or outward with quite a bit of force. The most common causes of ankle sprains are from:

- Sport or dance
- Tripping over a curb
- Falling in a pothole
- Tripping in high heels

It is more common to roll your foot in and sprain the outside of your ankle and so the information in this handout will assume a lateral (outside of your ankle) sprain. If you have sprained the inside of your ankle, replace the word “outside” with “inside”.

Symptoms –

You may have some or all of the following symptoms.

- Pain, swelling and/or bruising to the outside of your ankle and in severe cases up toward the calf
- Pain on the outside of your ankle when moving your ankle
- Pain when putting weight through your sprained ankle
- Tenderness on the outside of your ankle
- Pain worsening with movement and improving with rest

Treatment -

It is common to sprain your ankle at sport. You must start RICE (see below) as soon as possible.

YOU (at home)

- **Rest** from aggravating activities. If you are at sport, it is wise to stop playing immediately. In severe cases you may require crutches.
- **Ice**-packs to the outer ankle 15minutes every 2-3hours for the first 24hours. Ice 4x a day for the following 48hours. Do not ice for more than 20minutes.
- **Compression**. Use an elastic or crepe bandage to wrap firmly around your ankle to help control the swelling.
- **Elevate** your ankle above the level of your heart to help reduce swelling.
- Even though you need to rest, we still recommend you gently move your ankle around to reduce stiffness. Try to bring your toes toward your nose and then point them away from you. Repeat 10x in each direction 3x per day. This should not be

painful so you may only be able to move your toes very slightly at first. Increase your range as you are able to.

- Drinking alcohol and smoking slows the rate of healing. You may want to reduce or refrain from drinking or smoking while your ankle heals.

Your Physiotherapist

Our physios are trained in assessing and treating ankle sprains. We may use some or all of the following techniques to get you a speedy recovery and to help prevent future sprains.

- Acupuncture/ dry needling
- Cupping
- Ultrasound treatment
- Frictions to speed healing and align ligamentous fibres
- Massage and trigger point therapy to calf
- Taping or prescribe ankle brace
- Stretching and strengthening exercises
- Advice on anti-inflammatory medications or gel cream
- Home Program to return to sport and prevent reoccurrence.

For more severe cases where the ligament is completely torn, surgery may be necessary.

When to seek help –

It is time to see the physio if any of the following are true

- Your pain is worsening
- You have severe swelling and bruising
- If it has been 48hours since injury, and you do not notice any significant improvement
- You have a significant limp 48hours after injury
- You have sprained this ankle in the past
- You have a deadline (eg return to sport or work)

If left untreated, ankle sprains can become a regular occurrence. Proper rehabilitation is vital in preventing relapses by ensuring full movement, strength and balance returns with specific exercises and training.



PHYSIOTHERAPY + PILATES