

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT AND MINOR INJURY UNITS

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ANKLE SPRAIN

An ankle sprain is a common injury, often caused when the ankle is forced to bend more than normal. This stretches and weakens the ligaments and soft tissues that hold the ankle and foot bones in place. Symptoms include pain, swelling, bruising and inability to move the ankle normally.

Getting back to normal activity after an injury requires the pain and swelling to settle, the ankle to be mobilized and for you to do strengthening exercises.

Initial Treatment

The first treatment is to calm the inflammation and control the swelling and pain. This is best done with **rest, ice, painkillers and elevation**.

Early weight bearing has been shown to help sprained ankles to heal more quickly. This is why most people will not be given crutches. Always try to walk normally, with your heel striking the floor first, then rocking forward on your foot and pushing off with your toes.

Rehabilitation and Recovery

Healing of ligaments normally takes about **6 weeks**, however everyone recovers from injuries at different rates. Healing time is related to how severe your injury is and other medical problems that you might have.

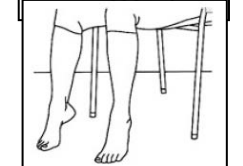
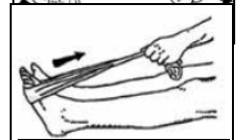
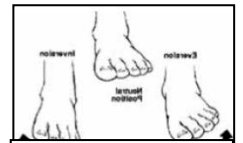
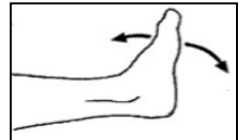
As healing gets underway, it is important that you begin a series of exercises.

Try do each of the exercises **ten times, 3-4x/day**.

This will help get you back the full use of your ankle by improving its flexibility and strength and will also help to reduce the risk of further sprains.

Ankle Exercises

1. Pull your foot upwards as far as you are able, hold for 5 seconds, and then point your foot away from you as far as you are able, hold for 5 seconds.
2. Turn the sole of your foot inwards and then outwards (keeping your knee still)
3. Use a towel or something which does not stretch to assist with the above exercises
4. Sit on a chair with your feet flat on the floor. Slide your injured foot backwards along the floor, keeping your foot flat on the floor throughout.
5. Sit on a chair and place a towel on the floor. Put your injured foot on the towel and, using your toes, "bunch" the towel up and pull it towards you.
6. Sit on a chair with both feet flat on the floor. Raise your heels up off the floor then lower them back down slowly.
7. When you can put weight on your foot start the following exercises as well. (a) Stand up onto your tip toes (10 times). (b) Stand on your affected foot only, bend up & down slowly and keep your balance. (10 times). (c) Walk heel - toe along a straight line. (10 times)



Physiotherapy



If your pain is affecting your activity and persisting, you can ask your GP to refer you to a physiotherapist, or you can refer yourself directly.

You can also download "NHS 24 MSK" App on your phone for exercises and advice. This resource is free of charge.