

How to treat your injured ankle

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Following injury, your ankle may be swollen, bruised, painful or stiff. In order to help the natural healing process, follow the advice below.

During the first 3 days

Rest as much as possible to discourage swelling, placing the ankle in an elevated position. Make sure your knee is supported. Frozen peas or crushed ice in a damp tea towel can be applied to the injured area. For maximum effect, apply for up to 20 minutes, every 2 hours. Cold can burn, so remove if uncomfortable.

After 3 days

Once the ankle feels less hot and painful, it is essential to start simple flexibility exercises to prevent stiffness. The exercises suggested should be performed slowly and thoroughly, moving into discomfort but short of pain. They can be repeated hourly through the day.

Exercise 1

Move your foot up and down at the ankle, moving as far as possible in each direction. **Repeat 10 times.**

Exercise 2

Move your foot in and out at the ankle, so the sole of the foot turns inwards and then outwards. **Repeat 10 times.**

Exercise 3

Combine all the above movements by moving the foot and ankle in as large a circle as possible. **Repeat 10 times.**

Compare the movements of your injured ankle with those of your other ankle. They should eventually be the same.

General exercise

As soon as you are able to put some weight through your injured ankle, start to get up and about more, gradually disregarding your crutches if you have them. Short walks are good for the healing ankle. Steadily build up your walking distance.

Please remember to return your crutches to the Emergency department when you have finished with them. Progress your exercises to include the following as soon as you can take full weight comfortably on your injured ankle.

Exercise 4 - for balance and control

- Time how long you can stand on your injured ankle without overbalancing. Then practice on your injured leg until it is as good as your other leg.
- Once you can do the above for 1 minute, practice throwing, catching or bouncing a ball whilst balancing on your injured leg.
- Try balancing on one leg and closing your eyes. You should eventually be equally good on each leg.

Exercise 5 - For strength

Hold on to a firm support with your feet slightly apart. Then rise up onto your toes and down.
Repeat until tired, 3 to 4 times daily.

Progress to performing the exercise on your injured leg alone until it can do the same as your other leg.

Exercise 6 - to regain essential movement

Lean forward on a firm surface, placing the injured foot flat in front of your other foot. Lean slowly forward, pushing your knee over your foot whilst keeping your heel flat to the floor. Hold at the point of tightness for 15 seconds. **Repeat 4 times.**

Evidence shows that the sooner this exercise improves, the more likely your ankle is to fully recover. If you are keen on keeping fit, then swimming and cycling are suitable forms of exercise but do not return to any sport involving running until your ankle is free of pain, fully mobile and strong. Depending on how badly your ankle is sprained, this may take between 4 to 8 weeks, longer in the case of severe sprains. It is worth knowing that following a sprain, the ankle can look thickened or swollen for some time.

If you are concerned about the progress of your ankle, then contact your GP or the Emergency Department that you originally attended.

Should you have any worries or concerns please contact:

Your team is based at

Telephone:

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Or write to Engagement and Communications
Voreda House | Portland Place | Penrith | CA11 7QQ