

Self Help for Sprained Ankles

Information and Exercise Leaflet for Patient's and Carers

What is a sprained ankle?

A sprained ankle occurs when the foot is forcibly overstretched inwards or outwards. This causes damage to the tissues which have been overstretched. The tissues may become inflamed.

Ankle Rehabilitation – Early Stage

The early stage of rehabilitation is for use when the ankle is painful and swollen. This is usually up to the first 10 days post injury. Follow the **PRICE** method (*Protection, Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation*)

- **Protection**

An elastic bandage, adhesive strapping or aircast splint will be provided if necessary from your Physiotherapist/Doctor. If you wish, a simple ankle support obtained from any good sports shop or chemist may be helpful at this stage.

- **Rest**

Some rest, but not complete rest is usually advised. A walking aid may be provided to take some weight off the injured ankle as you mobilise. When you are walking, try to walk as normally as possible. (e.g. without a limp or pointing the foot outwards), as this helps tissues heal correctly.

- **Ice**

- Apply the ice to the swollen area at least 3 times per day.
- Use an ice pack (either ice cubes or a bag of frozen vegetables) placed in a moist towel.
- Apply for 10-15 minutes.
- **DO NOT** apply if you have circulatory problems or poor skin sensation.
- If the skin becomes uncomfortable, stop the treatment until it returns to normal.

- **Compression**

Whilst the swelling remains, continue to wear your elasticated support / strapping. This will prevent further swelling and aid its reduction.

- **Elevation**

- When resting, elevate your foot higher than your hip (with your whole leg supported).
- Do not stand for long periods
- Or sit with your foot resting down on the floor.

Painkillers

Consult your GP or local pharmacist for advice as to which medication is suitable for you to take.

Active Exercises for Acute Ankle

- May be done approximately every 2 hours

Exercise 1

Move the ankle up and down 30 times.



Exercise 2

Move the ankle in and out 30 times.



Exercise 3

Move the ankle in a circular movement 15 times both directions

Progressive exercises

When your ankle is more settled, the following exercises are useful to help move you towards a more full recovery. You may do these twice a day.



Progressive Exercise 1

- In standing raise the toes off the floor.
- Try not to push your bottom backwards as you do this.
- Repeat 20 times as you are able.



Progressive Exercise 2

- Rise up onto your toes as high as you can.
- You may need to use your arms for a little support to begin with.
- Progress to no support as you are able.
- Repeat 20 times as you are able.



Progressive Exercise 3

- In a safe environment, stand on your affected leg and try to balance.
- Your aim is to be able to balance for longer periods of time.
- You may wish to practice for a few minutes at a time.

Warning

If your symptoms do not settle in an appropriate period of time contact your GP. This would normally be 4-6 weeks.

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