

Ankle injury

Information for patients, parents and carers

What is an ankle sprain?

An ankle sprain is an injury to the tough bands of tissue (ligaments) that surround and connect the bones of your leg to your foot. This injury typically happens when you accidentally twist or turn your ankle in an awkward way, forcing the ankle out of its normal position. This can stretch the ligaments leading to pain, swelling and bruising.

What is the treatment?

Immediately after suffering an ankle sprain it is important to manage it correctly. The best method is following PEACE and LOVE.

Please refer to the Soft Tissue Injury advice leaflet for more information.

P		PROTECTION Avoid activities and movements that increase pain during the first few days after injury.
E		ELEVATION Elevate the injured limb higher than the heart as often as possible.
A		AVOID ANTI-INFLAMMATORIES Avoid taking anti-inflammatory medications as they reduce tissue healing. Avoid icing.
C		COMPRESSION Use elastic bandage or taping to reduce swelling.
E		EDUCATION Your body knows best. Avoid unnecessary passive treatments and medical investigations and let nature play its role.
&		
L		LOAD Let pain guide your gradual return to normal activities. Your body will tell you when it's safe to increase load.
O		OPTIMISM Condition your brain for optimal recovery by being confident and positive.
V		VASCULARISATION Choose pain-free cardiovascular activities to increase blood flow to repairing tissues.
E		EXERCISE Restore mobility, strength and proprioception by adopting an active approach to recovery.

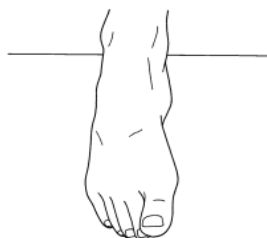
After a few days it is important to start moving your ankle again. This is to prevent your muscles and joints becoming stiff and will help with a speedy recovery.

To help this please follow the exercises below:



Sitting with your legs out. Push your toes and feet towards the ground as far as possible. Then pull your feet and toes towards you as far as possible.

Repeat 10 times, 2 times daily.



Turn your foot inwards, twisting at the ankle. Make sure to not move your knees or hips. Then turn your foot outwards in the opposite direction.

Repeat 10 times, 2 times daily.



Standing on a step

Have both feet on a step with your heels off the edge. Feel the stretch on your calf muscle at the back of your leg.

Hold the stretch for 30 seconds and then relax, 3 times in a row.

Repeat daily.

Once you can move your ankle without feeling any pain, it is important to strengthen your ankle.

Here are a couple of ways to help:



Transfer your weight onto one leg. Bend your other knee behind you. Try and balance in this position.

Make sure you are standing beside a table that you can hold onto if you need to or you could do it whilst at the sink brushing your teeth.

You will notice some sway and shaking in your muscle but this is normal. Aim to stand on one leg for one minute on each side.

Do this as much as you can throughout the day.



Push up on your toes. You can use a countertop or support in front of you if you need to. Make sure you keep your knees straight and push up through your toes, not your arms.

Try and push up 10 times or as many as you can without feeling pain. Do this daily.

Walking

Try to return to walking normally as soon as you are able. This will help to strengthen your ankle.

Put as much weight as possible through your sore ankle and try to avoid any limping. Try to put your heel on the ground first, and then push off with your toes.

Return to activity

Once your ankle is no longer painful and movement is much better you can gradually return to gentle activities.

As your ankle continues to feel better you can gradually return to your usual activities. Make sure you warm up fully before an activity and cool down fully afterwards.

Further advice

If your symptoms are not settling please attend your GP for further assessment or you can contact the physiotherapy department on the details below.



Contact telephone number

If you have any concerns, contact:

Physiotherapy Team

Therapies Department,
Royal Hospital for Children and Young People,

50 Little France Crescent
Edinburgh
EH16 4SA

Telephone: **0131 312 1079**