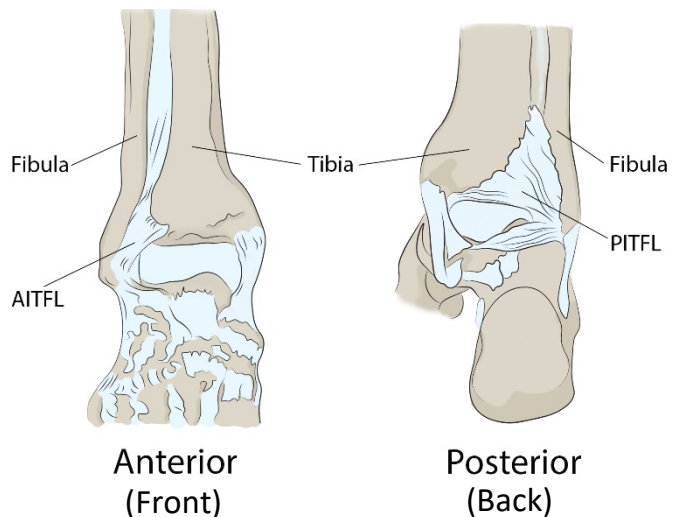


What is a syndesmosis injury?

A syndesmosis injury—often called a *high ankle sprain*—happens when the ligaments that hold the two lower leg bones (the tibia and fibula) together are stretched or torn. These ligaments, found at the front and back of the ankle, help keep the ankle joint stable.

Syndesmosis injuries are less common than typical ankle sprains, but they often take longer to heal. They usually occur when the foot is planted firmly on the ground and the foot twists suddenly. This can happen during sports such as football, rugby, skiing, or basketball. They may also occur after a fall, an accident, or alongside certain ankle fractures.



How is it diagnosed?

A healthcare professional will examine your foot and ankle to check for pain, swelling, and how well you can move and use the joint. A standing X-ray may be taken to support the findings of the examination. Additional tests are usually only needed if your symptoms do not improve as expected.

What are the symptoms?

- Pain felt above the ankle joint
- Swelling around the ankle
- Bruising at the ankle and foot
- Reduced movement or stiffness at the ankle
- Symptoms that last longer than a typical ankle sprain.

What are the causes/risk factors?

- High impact injuries during sports
- Direct contact to the ankle or lower leg
- Falls
- Injuries that occur at the same time as some ankle fractures.



How can you manage a syndesmosis injury?

Non-Operative management:

- A short period of wearing a moon boot or brace may be used at the very start to help protect the ankle.
- Physiotherapy is the main part of treatment. It aims to improve movement and build the strength in the muscles around your foot and ankle. Your physiotherapist will also guide you on returning to your usual activities as your symptoms improve.
- Keeping to a healthy weight can help reduce stress on the ankle during recovery.
- Supportive footwear or trainers can make everyday activities more comfortable.

Do I need surgery?

Most syndesmosis injuries are treated without an operation. In more severe cases—such as when the ligaments are fully torn or when the injury occurs alongside a fracture—surgical treatment may be considered.