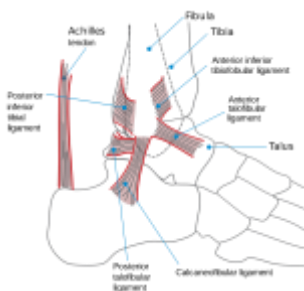


Ankle sprain



An ankle sprain is an injury to the tough bands of tissue (ligaments) that surround and connect the bones around the ankle joint. It typically happens when you accidentally twist or turn your ankle in an awkward way. This can stretch or tear the ligaments but can also affect tendons and blood vessels in the surrounding areas.

It is more common to damage the outside ligaments of your ankle when you have an inversion sprain (the bottom of your foot rolls inwards) but the inside ligaments can also be affected too.



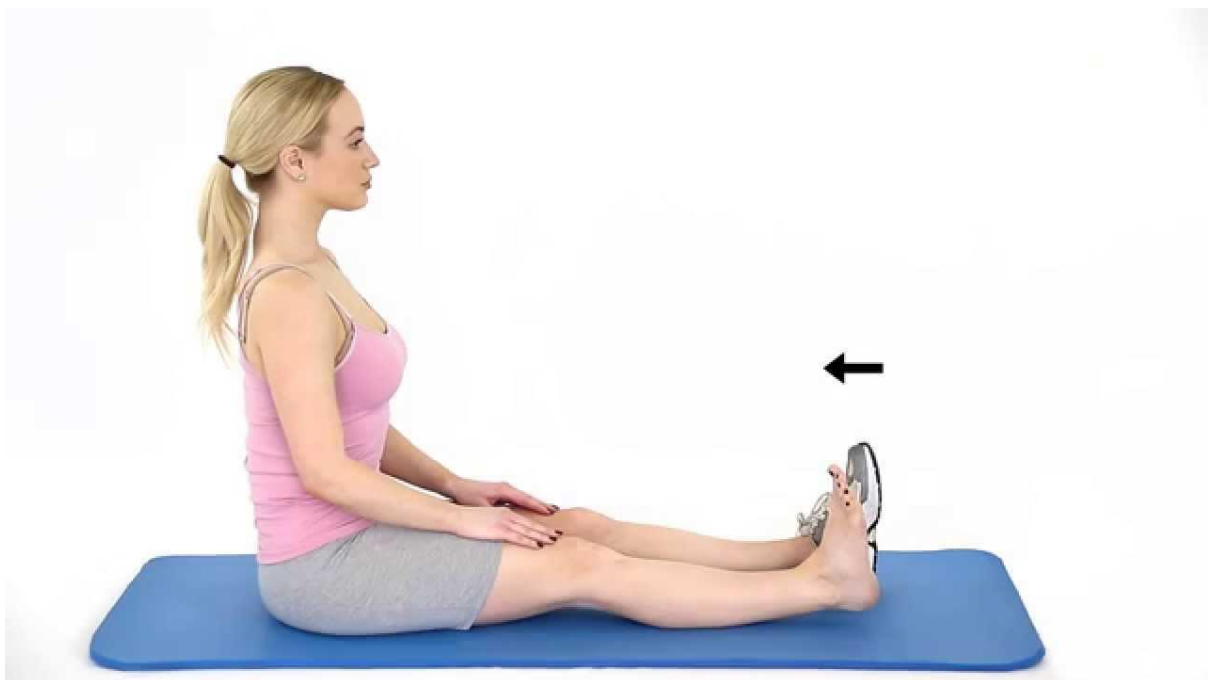
Following an ankle injury you will normally experience pain, bruising and sudden swelling and you may find it difficult to weight bear on that side.

Treatment

Mild sprains can be treated at home with the **RICE** principle;

- Rest the affected area for at least the first 48 hours. You may require crutches to avoid putting weight on your leg.
- Ice can help to reduced swelling and inflammation. Only use ice for 20 minutes at a time but do not apply directly to the skin, use a damp cloth between the ice and the injured area.
- Compression can help to prevent additional swelling. Wear an elastic compression bandage and remove for sleeping.
- Elevation can help to reduce swelling. Recline when you rest, and put your leg up higher than your heart. The compression should be snug to the skin but not restricting blood flow.

As soon as you feel able to move the ankle joint it is important to try to regain some movement in it to prevent joint stiffness and muscle loss. The following exercises are useful for early range of movement.



- Sit or lay down with your leg out straight
- Gently bring your toes up towards you and then allow the foot to relax
- Now point your toes away from you and then allow the foot to relax

- Repeat these movements for 30 seconds to a minute regularly through the day



- Sit or lay down with your leg out straight
- Gently make circular movements with your foot
- Remember to try the exercise both clockwise and anticlockwise
- Repeat these movements for 30 seconds to a minute regularly through the day

It can take several weeks or months for a sprained ankle to heal completely and does depend on the severity of your sprain.

Generally you can walk on your ankle about a week after a sprain, can use it fully after 6-8 weeks and return to sport at 12 weeks.

If you feel your Ankle is not recovering properly after the sprain, or you are struggling to return to activity ask your doctor to consider a referral to the MSK service or refer yourself via our website.