

Ankle Sprain / Ankle Instability



Scan this QR Code to access a detailed video that enhances the information in this handout. It includes step by step guidance and visual demonstrations for each exercise.

What happens during an ankle sprain?

An ankle sprain occurs when your ankle twists or rolls, leading to injury. This abrupt movement can stretch or tear the ligaments that support and stabilize the ankle joint.

Grade 1 sprains: minimal damage to ligaments, mild swelling and tenderness

Grade 2 sprains: partial tearing of ligaments, notable pain, swelling, and bruising

Grade 3 sprains: complete tearing of ligaments, unstable ankle, severe pain

How is it treated?

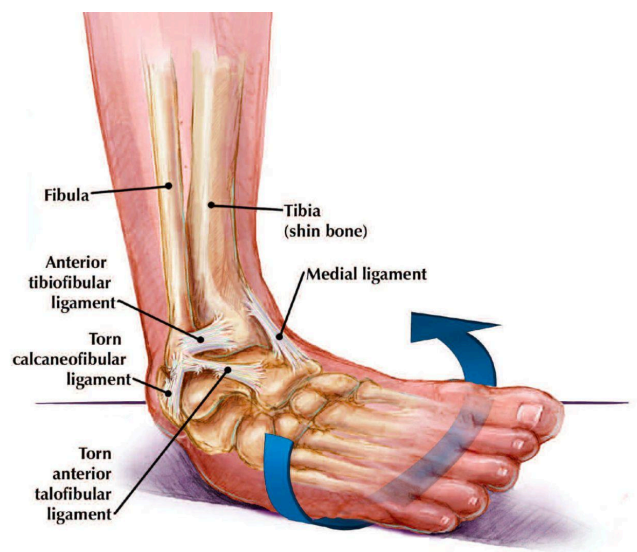
Initial treatment begins with the R.I.C.E. protocol. Apply ice for 15-20 minutes every few hours for the first 2-3 days. This will help reduce both pain and swelling. Wrapping the ankle with ACE bandages can also help control swelling and provide support. Try to elevate the ankle above the heart to further minimize swelling.

How long is the recovery?

Grade 1 sprains require minimal rest.
Early mobilization results in better outcomes.
Recovery is 1-3 weeks.

Grade 2 sprains may need limited weight bearing for up to 1 week.
Recovery is 4-6 weeks.

Grade 3 sprains may need immobilization with a walking boot or crutches.
Recovery can be several months.



Ankle Rehabilitation Exercises

Consistent rehabilitation following a sprained ankle can accelerate recovery and prevent recurrence. Do the following ankle rehabilitation program **daily for 4-6 weeks**.

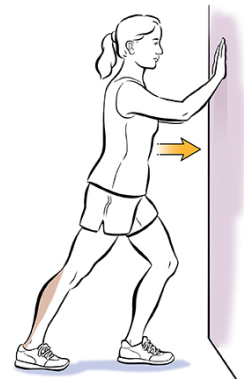
Ankle Range of Motion

- Objective: restore mobility and range of motion
- Extend your leg straight in front of you. Focus on moving your ankle up and down, side to side, and rotating it in circles. It's important to isolate the movement to your foot and ankle without moving your leg.
- Do this for 30 seconds, repeat a total of 3 times.



Standing Calf Stretch

- Objective: alleviate tension in the calves to improve mobility
- Face a wall and step your unaffected foot forward, keeping your back leg straight. Lean forward towards the wall until you feel a stretch in the calf of your back leg.
- Do this for 30 seconds, repeat a total of 3 times.



Ankle Dorsiflexion with Resistance Band

- Objective: improve strength and range of motion
- Loop a resistance band around your foot. Secure the other end of the band to a stable object. Gently pull your toes towards you. Briefly hold the dorsiflexed position, then slowly return to the starting position.
- Perform 2 sets of 15 repetitions.



Ankle Plantarflexion with Resistance Band

- Objective: improve strength and range of motion
- Loop a resistance band around your foot. Hold the other end of the band with both hands. Slowly push your toes forward, pointing them away from your body. Once your toes are fully pointed, hold the position briefly, then gently return to the starting position.
- Perform 2 sets of 15 repetitions.



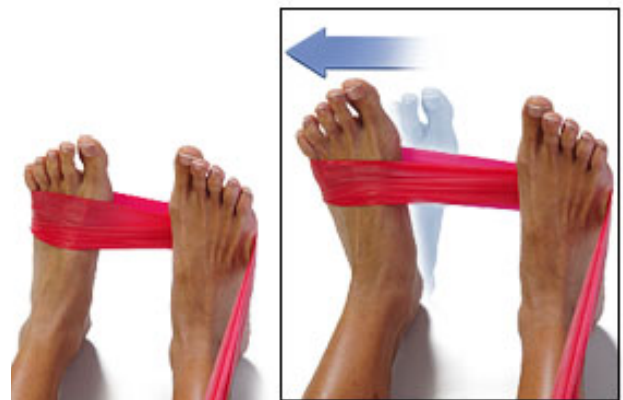
Ankle Inversion with Resistance Band

- Objective: improve strength and range of motion
- Sit with your legs straight in front of you. Cross your unaffected leg over the injured one. Wrap the resistance band around the forefoot of both feet. Slowly turn your injured foot inwards, stretching the band. Hold the position briefly at the point of maximum inversion, then gently return to the starting position.
- Perform 2 sets of 15 repetitions.



Ankle Eversion with Resistance Band

- Objective: improve strength and range of motion
- Sit with both legs stretched out in front of you. Loop the resistance band around the injured foot and wrap the other end around your other foot for stability. Gradually turn your injured foot outwards, stretching the band. Hold the position briefly at the point of maximum eversion, then slowly return to the starting position.
- Perform 2 sets of 15 repetitions.



Add these 3 exercises once you can stand on your injured ankle with minimal pain.

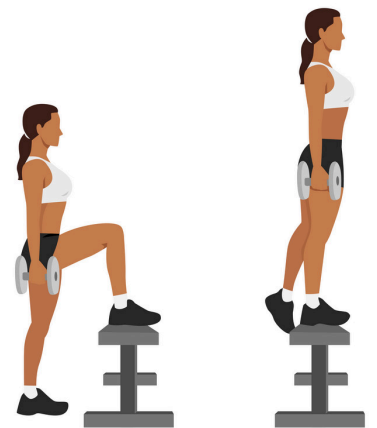
Heel Raise

- Objective: strengthen the calves and improve ankle stability
- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Slowly raise your body onto your toes, holding briefly at the top, then lower back down smoothly. As you gain strength, increase the challenge by performing the heel raise on a small platform or step, allowing your heel to drop below your foot level.
- Perform 2 sets of 15 repetitions.



Step Ups

- Objective: strengthen lower extremity muscles, improves balance and stability, addresses imbalances between legs
- Stand in front of a sturdy platform. Step up onto the platform with your injured foot first, followed by the other leg. Then step back down, leading with the injured foot. To further challenge yourself, increase the step height or perform the exercise while holding weights.
- Perform 2 sets of 15 repetitions.



Balance and Reach Exercise

- Objective: improve ankle stability, balance, and proprioception
- Visualize standing in the center of a letter 'Y', with one point in front and two points behind you. Stand on your injured leg. Use your uninjured foot to gently tap each point of the 'Y', maintaining balance throughout the movement. Return to the starting position after tapping each point.
- Do this for 30 seconds, repeat a total of 3 times.

