



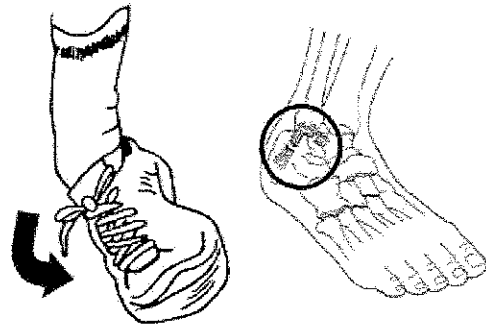
## **ANKLE SPRAIN – INITIAL MANAGEMENT**

An ankle sprain is an injury that causes a stretch or tear of one or more ligaments in the ankle joint.

Ligaments are strong bands of tissue that connect bones at the joint.

The most common type of sprain involves the ligaments on the outside part of the ankle (lateral ankle sprain - in upto 80% of ankle sprains).

Spraining an ankle can increase your risk of re-injury as much as 40-70%. But proper post-injury care and rehabilitation exercises can decrease this risk.



To Speed up recovery and immediately after an injury use the P.R.I.C.E regime but consult a doctor first if there is any concern about a broken bone (fracture).

- PROTECTION** of the injured soft tissue from further damage by the use of crutches
- REST** is required to prevent dense scar tissue. The period of rest should be discussed with a medical practitioner and can vary from one day to a week
- ICE** (Ice pack / frozen peas bag) applied in a damp cloth reduces pain and swelling – apply for 20 minutes 4 times a day for 2 days
- COMPRESSION** can be applied by a tubigrip – preferably by a practitioner – for first 72 hrs and will prevent excess swelling and pain
- ELEVATION** of injured part above heart level for the first 72 hrs to help excess fluid drain away and reduce swelling

## **ANKLE SPRAIN REHABILITATION**

To restore normal ankle function there are 4 main areas that need to be worked and should be started as recommended by your medical practitioner:

**Range of motion, Stretching, Strengthening and balance.**

**Range of motion Exercises** - Help you regain normal ankle motion



Sit with your knee straight. Flex your foot back toward your body and hold the foot position as long as possible. Do as frequently as possible for the first 3-10 days.

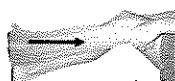
**Stretching Exercises** - Loosen tight leg muscles, making it easier to walk, run and jump. Start these exercises 2 days after injury as long as they do not cause much pain

Hold each exercise for 20 seconds at a gentle stretch  
10 repetitions per exercise twice a day



**Calf Stretch**

Sit with your knee straight and towel looped around the ball of your foot. Slowly pull back until you feel your upper calf stretch.



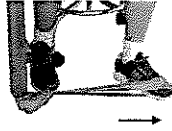
**Heel Stretch**

Sit with your knee slightly bent. Loop a towel around the ball of your foot. Slowly pull back until you feel a stretch in the lower calf + heel.



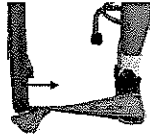
**Strengthening exercises** - Strong leg muscles help the ligaments hold the ankle together. Start these exercises 2 days after injury as long as they do not cause much pain

Try and do 10 repetitions per exercise twice a day



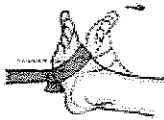
**Resisted Eversion**

Tie the band to a desk or dresser.  
Sit with your foot and knee in line and loop the band over the outside of your foot.  
Push your foot out against the band.



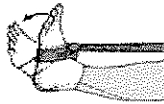
**Resisted Inversion**

Tie the band to a desk or dresser.  
Sit with your foot and knee in line, and loop the band over the inside of your foot.  
Push your foot in against the band.



**Resisted Dorsiflexion**

Tie the band to a desk or dresser.  
Sit with your leg straight and loop the band over the top of your foot.  
Slowly pull your foot back against the band.



**Resisted Plantarflexion**

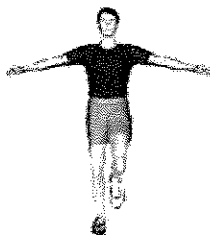
Sit on floor and hold theraband in hand  
Sit with your leg straight and loop the band over the top of your foot.  
Slowly pull your foot back against the band.

**Balance**

- An ankle sprain can decrease your ability to balance on that foot and makes it easier to roll the ankle again.
- As soon as you can stand without pain, try the balance tests below.
- If you can't balance for ten seconds without wobbling, practice that level every day until you can.

Balance on your injured foot for ten seconds, do at least 6 repetitions per day

Your goal is to stand 60 seconds without losing your balance and then move to the next level



Level 1 - Arms out to your side, eyes open

Level 2 - Arms across your chest, eyes open

Level 3 - Arms out to your side, eyes closed

Level 4 - Arms across your chest, eyes closed

- Once you have passed level 4 you can make things more difficult by standing on a pillow or by using a wobble board and starting from level 1 again.

**When can I return to my normal activities?**

Everyone recovers from an injury at a different rate. The healing of the ligaments can vary between 1-8 weeks depending on the severity. This is not a comprehensive reconditioning program, but will get you on your way to recovery until you are able to see a physiotherapist. The balance work above is extremely important, otherwise the ligament is liable to be injured again.

Do not return to sports until you are pain free and able to do the above exercises without any problems. If your ankle isn't 80% functional after one month, recontact your doctor for a review.