



Queen Victoria Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

Ankle Sprain



This information leaflet has been produced by Senior Physiotherapists working at the Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

What is an ankle sprain?

An ankle sprain is one of the most common types of soft tissue injury. It occurs when the foot is moved through a greater range of movement than normal. This stretches and weakens the soft tissues and ligaments that support the ankle.

Symptoms

These may include:

- Pain
- Swelling
- Bruising
- Difficulty moving the ankle normally



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Recovery

The initial pain usually settles after a few days. During this time it is important to follow the advice outlined in this leaflet. The soft tissues (muscles and ligaments) will take approximately six weeks to heal. This may vary as different people recover from injuries at different rates.

Management

Painkillers such as anti-inflammatories may be prescribed by your GP and should be taken at the recommended dose.

Cold packs (such as ice or frozen peas wrapped in a tea-towel) can also provide short term pain relief. Apply to the painful area for

approximately 20 minutes. This can also help with the swelling.

Rest is important for the first 24-72 hours; however during this time it is important to maintain flexibility of the ankle. Gently moving the ankle within the pain-free range will help ensure your ankle does not become stiff and will also help the healing process.

Elevation can help reduce swelling. Raise and support your ankle above the level of your hips when you are resting.

Early movement and exercise is important to help your ankle heal more quickly. Early weight-bearing (putting weight through the injured ankle) has been shown to speed up the healing process, so most people with an ankle sprain will not be given crutches

Exercises

The following exercises should not increase your pain. Perform each exercise gently and slowly, only moving as far as feels comfortable. If you have used ice, allow 30 minutes before exercising. Complete two to three times per day:

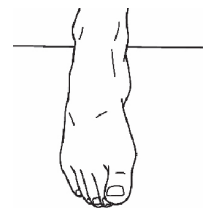
1. Lying on your back or sitting. Point your foot up and down. Repeat 10 times.

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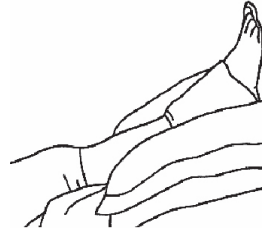
2. Lying on your back or sitting. Alternately raise the inner border of your foot (big toe) and then the outer border (little toe). Repeat 10 times.

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3. Lie or sit with your leg elevated. Place an ice pack in a tea towel and over the ankle. Hold 20 minutes.

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And finally...

The length of time it takes for your ankle to recover depends on the severity of the original injury. It can take a few months to regain full function. If the pain and swelling has not shown improvement within two weeks and you are unable to weight-bear please seek medical advice.

If you have any queries regarding this information or the exercises provided, please contact the

Physiotherapy department

Tel: 01342 414004.

Please ask if you
would like this leaflet
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