

PHYSIOTHERAPY DEPARTMENT

Managing Acute Ankle Injuries



About Ankle Sprains

Most ankle sprains occur when the foot rolls either inwards or outwards. This movement can overstretch some of the ligaments in the ankle. If you sustain an ankle sprain, follow the advice offered by your physiotherapist. Follow the **R.I.C.E.** regimen below.



Rest: Limit your walking for the first **3 days** after injury but then progress walking indoors and outdoors. Use crutches or a walking stick as you have been advised

Ice: Apply ice to the injured area at least **4 times per day for 15 minutes** to reduce pain and swelling (use an ice pack or a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel). Leave 2 hours between applications.

Compression: Wear the elastic bandage provided to help reduce swelling. Please **take it off** going to bed or If your toes become cold or you develop pins and needles in your foot

Elevation: To reduce swelling, elevate your ankle so that it is **above hip level.** You can also place pillows under your foot when in bed at night.

Walking/ Crutches: If advised to weight bear on the injured ankle restore your normal heel-toe walking pattern as soon as possible. Continue with crutches until advised otherwise by your physiotherapist. If you are using only one crutch it is important that you use it on the opposite side to your injured ankle

Exercises

Resting your ankle for too long can actually prolong your pain and disability. Here are a few gentle exercises you should start doing just **3 days** after your injury...

Exercise 1: Pull your toes up towards your head until you feel a stretch in the back of your leg. Hold for 10 seconds. Now point your toes as far away from you as you can. Again hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 10 times.



Exercise 2: Gently roll the sole of your foot inwards (as if you are trying to look under your big toe). Then gently roll the sole of your foot outwards (as if trying to look under your little toe). Repeat 10 times



Exercise 3: Gently rotate your ankle in a circle first moving clockwise. Then repeat rotating your ankle in the opposite direction. Repeat 10 times



Exercise 4 (stretches)

1. Stand with the leg to be stretched behind you. Toes forward, heels on the ground. Bend the front knee. Keep the back knee straight. Hold for 20 seconds. Repeat 3 times.

2. Standing in front of a wall, place your toes against the skirting board, keep the heel on the ground and bring your knee to the wall. Hold for 20 seconds. Repeat 3 times.



Exercise 6 (Strengthening)

Holding onto something stable for support, push up onto your tip-toes on both feet. Try to keep your weight even between sides. Repeat 10 times.



Exercise 6 (Balance)

Holding onto something stable for support, try to stand on your affected leg and maintain your balance. Repeat 5 times.

