

ANKLE SPRAINS

THE INJURY

Ankle sprains are the most common sport injuries. Sprains occur when the ligaments connecting the ankle are stretched, ruptured or torn as the ankle rolls inward during injury. Ankle sprains can heal quickly or may lead to prolonged chronic problems depending on the severity of injury and the treatment received.

Degree of injury

First degree: Ankle ligaments are stretched, not torn. The individual can bear weight, has some pain and swelling but should be back in 1-2 weeks.

Second degree: The ligaments are partially torn resulting in immediate swelling and bruising. Recovery will take several weeks but should be complete; may require physical therapy.

Third degree: The ligaments are completely torn. This will require casting, physical therapy and approximately 6-12 weeks to recover.

THE TREATMENT

Treatment depends upon the severity of injury. A physician should evaluate the ankle. X-rays should be taken if there is point tenderness on the ankle bones and/or significant pain with weight bearing. Grade III sprains are treated in a walking cast for three weeks; then, with a conditioning (Stage II) program. Only rarely is surgery indicated and only after a course of peroneal strengthening has failed.

Stage I (0-72 hours)

Protection, crutches or cane, walking.

Rest.

Ice; 20" on, off (60"-90" total), 2x a day

Compression - ace bandage.

Elevation: sleep with foot on several pillows.

Stage II (3 days - 1 week)

Exercise: alphabet, gentle walking using pain as a guide; swimming.

Stage III (2nd week)

Definite walking, ankle rocks, heel and toe walking.

Plantar flexion/dorsiflexion stretching.

Exercises— peroneal pocketbook strengthening vs. thera-band (see reverse)

Stage IV (Return to sport/activity criteria)

To test your ankle for return to activity:

1. Stand on your toes x1 minute.
2. Hop on your foot x10.
3. Start jogging.
4. Do figure of 8 running.
5. Cut back and forth without pain.

If all of the above do not hurt, you may resume full sports activity. An ankle brace or support should be worn the first 2-3 months after a significant ankle injury.

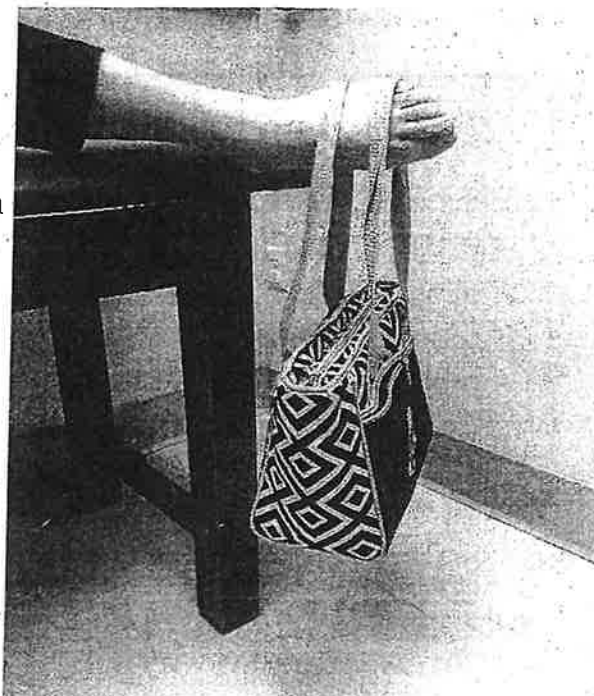
EXERCISES

The #1 cause of ankle pain post sprain = peroneal weakness. Exercising will strengthen muscles that support the injured area and help prevent re-injury and chronic problems. Do each recommended exercise every other day, 3 sets of 15 each exercise.

General Exercises. Swimming and riding a bike can provide an excellent workout for your calf and ankle.

“Pocketbook” exercise. This is the best home exercise regimen and will rehabilitate injured or “weak” ankles. Lay sideways on a couch with the inside of the heel resting on the arm of the couch. With toes pointed down, evert (turn the toes outward towards the ceiling). Place 2 pounds (1 quart) of weight in a pocketbook and place this on your foot. Do 3 sets of 15 repetitions holding each for 5 seconds. Working up to 8 pounds (gallon of water). Do this 3 days/week.

***A lot of people use rubber bands, but you never know how hard you are working..you can't cheat gravity, therefore we prefer pocketbook exercises*



Count 1,2,3,4,5...2,2,3,4,5...3,2,3,4,5...4,2,3,4,5...5,2,3,4,5...6,2,3,4,5...up to 15
(1 quart = 2lbs....2 quarts=4lbs....3 quarts=6lbs.....1 gallon=8lbs)

Exercises with resistance (therabands)

Obtain a strip (about 2 feet long) of elastic band from your physician. You may substitute a bicycle innertube. Work your ankle in four directions. As you do each exercise, pull the tubing out taut, heel on the floor, and make sure you do the exercises only with your foot and ankle, not your whole leg. The tube should be placed at the base of your toes.

Out and up. Sit on floor or chair. Loop tubing over foot and around table leg. With heel on floor, work ankle out and up.

In and up. As before, but loop band to provide tension against an inward move. With heel on floor, work ankle in and up.

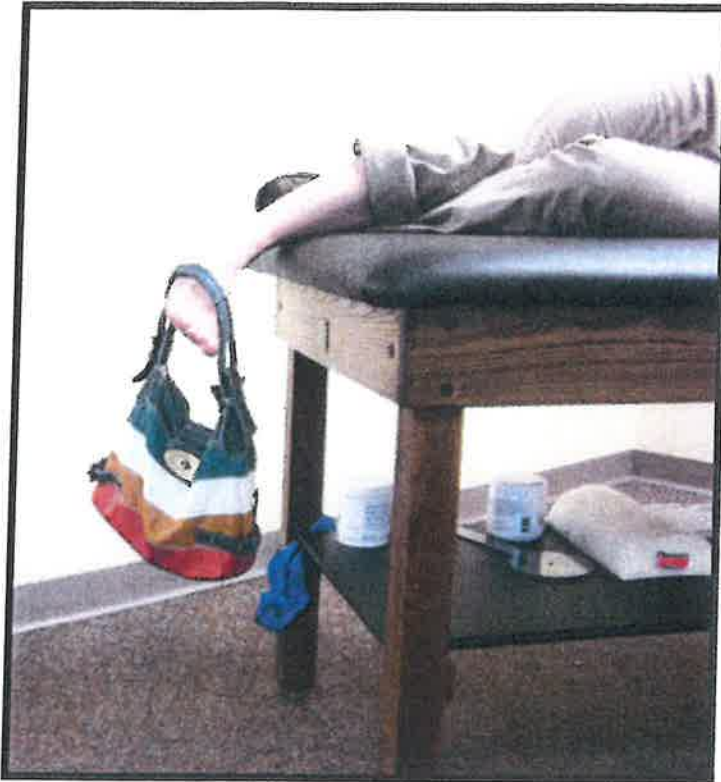
Straight up. Loop band over foot and around table leg. With heel on floor, work ankle straight up.

Straight down. Hold band loop against bottom of foot. With heel on floor, work ankle down.

Contributing Factors for Ankle Sprains

Weak ankles
Prior injury
Inappropriate footwear
Overweight
Uneven terrain
Cavus or supinated foot

Pocketbook Exercise



Pocketbook: place ____ pounds in the pocket book prior to beginning.

Start: in sidelying position with the injured foot on the top and other leg bent under, place the pocketbook on your foot as shown. Gently raise your foot toward the ceiling until you have reached your end range.

End: Lower back to starting position.

Begin:
____ sets of ____ repetitions

Progress to:
____ sets of ____ repetitions

Repeat ____ times per day

