

Ankle Sprains

An ankle sprain is an injury to the ankle ligament(s). An inversion ankle sprain is one of the most common injuries and most people achieve full recovery with appropriate advice. After an ankle sprain, it is normal to notice swelling over the ankle. Pain and swelling are part the body's healing process. However, excessive pain and swelling can inhibit your ability to move and recover, hence it is important to take steps to help manage the swelling.

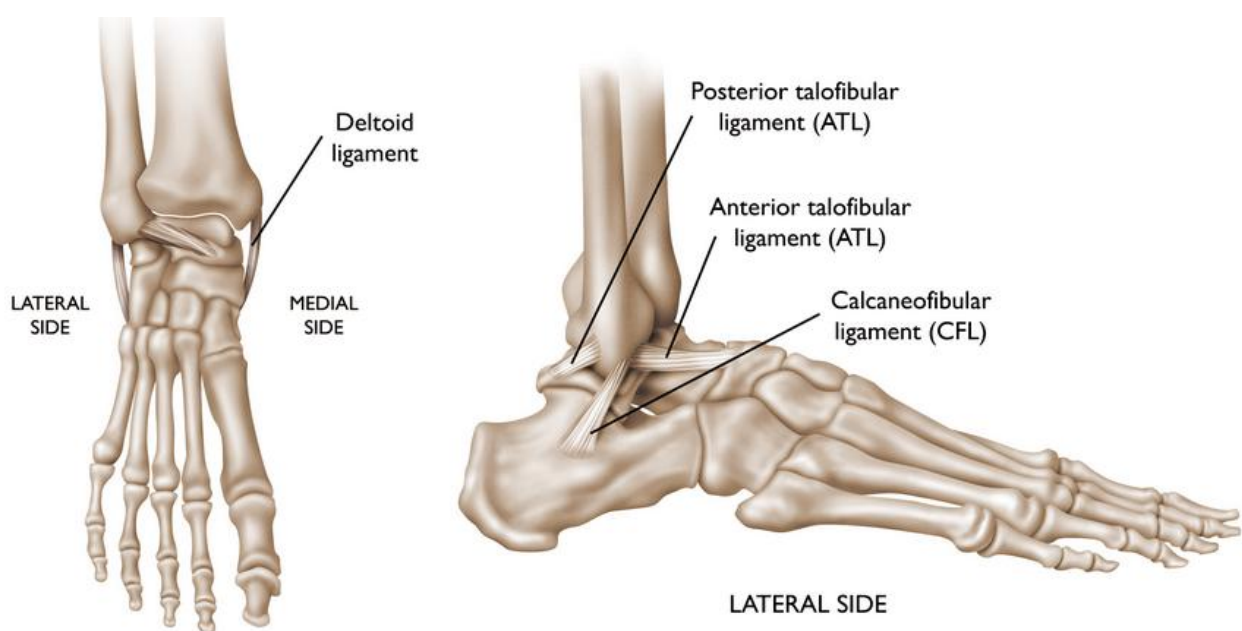


Image from: <https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/diseases--conditions/sprained-ankle/>

One way is to use the following acronym: PRICE.

What is PRICE?

P	Protecting the ankle means using an ankle brace until you have recovered. Avoid wearing high-heels and walking on slopes to prevent potential or further injuries. In some cases, as advised by the doctor, you may be given a walker boot to offload the foot for a short period of time.
R	Rest the ankle to allow it time to heal. We encourage 'relative rest' where you reduce the use of the affected foot for 3-7 days. You should feel better progressively and you can begin to put some weight on the ankle.
I	Ice the ankle using crushed ice in a bag or a cold compress/bandage over the sore ankle to help reduce pain and inflammation. Apply for about 15 – 20 minutes, 2 – 3 times per day.
C	Compress the ankle by wrapping it with an elastic bandage firmly. Remove the bandage when doing exercises or when in bed.
E	Elevate your sprained ankle if you are sitting or lying for long periods of time.

Do I need an ankle brace or a walking aid?

- Some individuals find that using an ankle brace improves their confidence to return to their work/important daily activities.
- Check with your physiotherapist regarding an appropriate ankle brace depending on your condition, as you may or may not need it
- If you have bought it or already using it, do bring it along for your therapy sessions so the physiotherapist can advise you further.
- Depending on the severity of the sprain, your physiotherapist may advise you to use a walking aid to help protect your ankle during this initial phase.

What else should I avoid?

- Putting heat over the affected area within 1 week after injury
- Alcohol consumption
- Activities that can increase my risk of a sprain again e.g. avoid undulating terrain or activities that require running, jumping and pivoting until you have overcome the sensation of instability and regained your confidence.

What can I do for the time being besides PRICE?

- Movement is crucial for recovery but too much may increase your pain. Let pain be your guide to how much you should be moving. You should at least move your ankle every hour. We recommend performing ankle pumps until you see your doctor or physiotherapist.

Ankle pumps

Gently move your ankle "up" and "down" in a pain-free range. It is normal to experience more discomfort to move the ankle "down" as compared to "up". Perform this action 20 times every hour.



Timeline for recovery (return to normal daily activities)

The time it takes for you to recover often depends on the severity of your injury.

- A simple (mild) ankle sprain should allow you to walk comfortably within 1 – 2 weeks.
- Many sprains take 6 – 12 weeks to feel much better.
- If you're an active person, it is likely that you can return to jogging 6 weeks after.

If this is the first time you experience an ankle sprain, the risk of suffering another sprain on the same ankle is estimated to be as high as 40-80%. If you feel that your ankle is unstable when you walk, this is a sign that you will require specific intervention. Discuss with your doctor regarding getting a referral for physiotherapy.

Why am I not getting better?

Most people fully recover from ankle sprains within 6-12 weeks, depending on the severity of the ankle sprain. If you find that you are not getting better with time, please highlight this to your physiotherapist or doctor so that they can re-assess your condition to rule out the possibility of other injuries.



Contributed by Physiotherapy, Rehabilitation, Allied Health Services

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