

What is it?

An acute injury to any or all of the ligaments supporting the ankle structure

How to treat it?

RICER. Second and third degree sprains may require immobilisation and should seek medical attention immediately

Symptoms

First degree – little or no swelling, mild pain, stiffness of joint. Second degree – more swelling and stiffness, moderate to severe pain, difficulty with weight bearing and some instability of the joint. Third degree – severe swelling and pain, inability to bear weight, instability in joint, total loss of function in the joint

Top Tips

Ice and immobilise ankle as soon as possible

What causes it?

Sudden twisting of the foot, or rolling medially or laterally. Most common is laterally. High impact sports involving jumping, sprinting or running on changing or uneven surfaces often lead to ankle sprains.



Rehab

Strengthen muscles of the lower leg to prevent future sprains. Balance activities will help to increase proprioception (the body's awareness of movement and position of the body) and strengthen the weakened ligaments. Flexibility exercises to reduce stiffness and improve mobility. Bracing during initial return to activity may be needed but should not replace strengthening and flexibility development.

Definitions

Ligament – a short band of tough, flexible fibrous connective tissue which connects two bones or cartilages. Holds a joint together.

Medial – a movement inwards towards the body's midline

Lateral – a movement outwards away from the body's midline

Grading – severity classification. Graded 1-3, increasing in severity.

RICER – rest, ice, compress, elevate, refer

Associated Conditions

- Posterior Tibial Tendinitis
- Peroneal Tendon Subluxation
- Peroneal Tendinitis
- Osteochondritis Dissecans (Ankle)
- Ankle Supination
- Pronation
- Retrocalcaneal Bursitis
- Extensor and Flexor Tendinitis

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References: The Anatomy of Sports Injuries by Brad Walker, Anatomy & Physiology by Louise Tucker and Google.com