



ANKLE SPRAINS

A sprained ankle is a very common type of ankle injury that occurs when the foot gets twisted or turned beyond its normal range and the ligament gets damaged.

A ligament is a strong band of fibrous tissue that connects bone to bone making the joint strong and stable whilst allowing movement within range.

Lateral ankle sprains most commonly occur if you suddenly twist your foot too far inwards – this is called an inversion sprain causing pain and swelling on the outside of the ankle.

Symptoms:

- Pain
- Swelling
- Bruising
- Restricted movement
- Difficulty weightbearing
- Feeling unstable
- Popping sensation or sound at time of injury

Ankle Sprains are graded on how bad the injury is:

GRADE 1 – **mild** sprain, mild swelling, bruising and pain around your ankle. You should be able to put some weight through the foot

GRADE 2 – **moderate** sprain, overstretch or partially tear. Swelling and bruising around the ankle, difficult to weight bear.

GRADE 3 – **severe** sprain, completely torn ligament. Swelling, bruising and pain around the ankle. Ankle may feel unstable and painful if try to put any weight through the foot.



Self-help strategies to ease symptoms

POLICE principles:

P – Protect. Rest the ankle and protect from further damage

OL – Optimal Loading. Start moving your ankle and putting weight through it as soon as you can, this is a gradual process guided by your response.

I – Ice. Cold compress such as ice or frozen peas wrapped in a towel not placed directly on the skin for 15-20 mins every couple of hours in the first few days to help with swelling.

C – Compression. Bandage to compress area and reduce swelling

E – Elevate. Raise your ankle above the level of your heart

Avoid **HARM**

Heat can increase blood flow and inflammation in the first 72 hours

Alcohol can increase blood flow and swelling, reducing healing

Running or impact exercise can make the injury worse

Massage during the first 72 hours can increase bleeding and swelling, after this can be soothing and improve function

Moderate to severe sprains benefit from physiotherapy exercises and rehab once the initial pain and swelling have settled.

The exercises help with ankle motion and mobilization preventing stiffness, and work to strengthen the joint, improve balance and prevent chronic instability.

