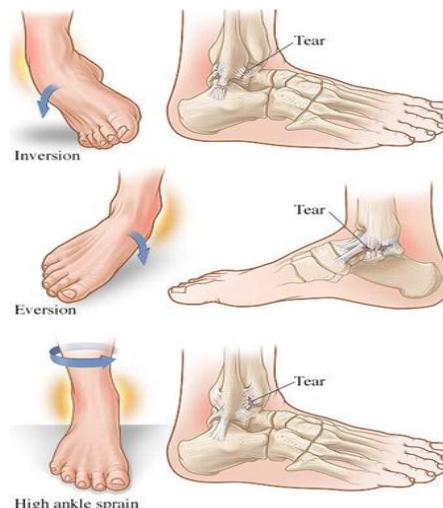


LATERAL ANKLE SPRAIN

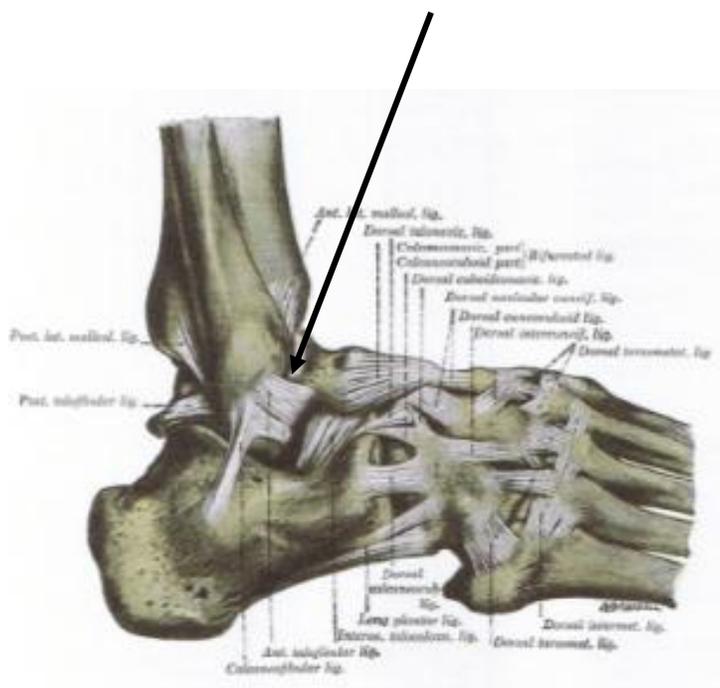
Lateral ankle sprain is a very common injury among active people, particularly in sports or activities that involve turning and quick changes in direction, for example hockey or football.

An ankle sprain can happen when you fall, if you suddenly twist your ankle too far, or when you force the joint out of its normal position (for example if you land awkwardly on your foot after jumping).

This happens most commonly when the foot is turned inward, and is called an inversion sprain or lateral ankle sprain. The ligament most affected in an inversion sprain, is the Anterior Talofibular Ligament (ATFL).



(rehabanklesprain.com, 2012)



If you sprain an ankle at training or during a game, remember...

RICER!

- R** Rest the injured joint
- I** Ice the affected area
- C** Compression bandage the ankle to manage swelling
- E** Elevate to reduce swelling
- R** Refer to a qualified health professional such as a physiotherapist, for a precise diagnosis & treatment

Ankle sprains are rated in severity on a scale of 1 to 3

(rehabanklesprain.com, 2012)

<p>Grade 1</p> <p>A mild sprain is known as Grade 1. This occurs when there is slight stretching and some damage to the fibre (fibrils) of the ligament. Usually, you can place pressure on your foot and walk afterward.</p>	<p>Signs & Symptoms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or no joint instability. • Mild pain. • There may be mild swelling around the bone on the outside of the ankle. • Some joint stiffness or difficulty walking or running. 	<p>Recovery time 0 – 3 weeks</p>
<p>Grade 2</p> <p>A moderate sprain is known as Grade 2. Here a partial tearing of the ligament occurs. If the ankle joint is examined and moved in certain ways, abnormal looseness (laxity) of the ankle joint occurs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some instability of the joint. • Moderate to severe pain and difficulty walking. • Swelling and stiffness in the ankle joint. • Minor bruising may be evident. 	<p>Recovery time 3 – 6 weeks</p>
<p>Grade 3</p> <p>Finally, a severe sprain is known as Grade 3. In this kind of injury, a complete tear of the ligament occurs. If the examiner pulls or pushes on the ankle joint in certain movements, gross instability occurs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total rupture of a ligament. • Gross instability of the joint. • Severe pain initially followed later by no pain. • Severe swelling. • Usually extensive bruising. 	<p>Recovery time 6 to 12 weeks +</p>

HELPFUL TIPS...

- In the first 48 hours, **ice** for around 20 minutes every couple of hours to help with pain and swelling.
- Remember to use a **barrier** between your skin and the ice to protect your skin from ice burn e.g. wet towel
- Make an **appointment** with your physiotherapist to assess the severity of the ankle sprain, and to start your rehabilitation

REHABILITATION FOLLOWING ANKLE SPRAIN

How soon can I exercise or return to play?

This depends on the severity of the sprain. Cycling, swimming or even running may be okay to return to right away, if they don't cause pain during or after exercise.

Your ankle needs to be 100% before you return to a sport that involves a lot of twisting and changing of direction. The ankle sustains multi-directional forces during this type of activity so you may need to have it taped up for support and protection.

Consult with a physiotherapist to diagnose the severity of the sprain, and to ensure that you return to sport within a safe timescale.

What can I do to help rehabilitate my ankle?

After the initial pain and swelling as decreased, your physiotherapist may start you on a rehabilitation programme.

Strengthening



- **Theraband:** Sitting, loop a theraband (resistance band) around the ball of your injured foot. Stand on the theraband with the other foot so that it is taut. Now pull up and away leading with the little toe so you meet the resistance of the band. Do ___ sets of ___ repetitions.

- **Calf raises:** Standing with feet hip-width apart, rise up slowly (concentric) onto the balls of your feet, ensuring your ankles are in line, and lower slowly (eccentric).
Do ___ sets of ___ repetitions.
Progress to calf-raises on your affected leg only.



None of these exercises should cause any pain, stiffness or swelling. If so, please consult with your physiotherapist.

Balance

- **Star Balance Exercise:** Stand on your affected leg (stance leg), and while keeping your other leg straight, point your toe and tap out a 4 point pattern in front, to the side and behind you. To progress this, try bending the knee of your stance leg, or try and cross your 'mid-line' with your tapping foot, in front, and behind you.



- **Single leg standing:** Start by standing on one leg with your arms across your chest and your other knee bent. If you can balance for more than 30 seconds, increase the challenge by trying to do it with your eyes closed. You can also try balancing on your toes (a more unstable ankle position), on a cushion or wobble board to make it more difficult.



- **Bosu ball / Lever board balance:** Bosu balance can be challenging. Start with the Bosu up-turned so you are standing on the flat surface. Start with both feet on the Bosu. Make sure you are near a rail or a wall so if you feel unbalanced you have something to steady yourself. Progress to one-leg standing. Try balancing on one leg at a time, working up to 20 secs without having to hold on, or put your other foot down.



The Bosu can be turned back the other way so you are trying to balance on the cushion. Again start with both feet on the Bosu, progressing to one leg stands.

*None of these exercises should cause any pain, stiffness or swelling.
If so, please consult with your physiotherapist.*



Plyometric

- **Hop and balance:** Stand with your feet hip width apart. Jump up and land on both feet; progress to single leg. Balance for 3 seconds and repeat on the other leg. Be careful to keep your knee in line with your 2nd toe. Repeat ___ times per leg.



- **Multi-directional:** When you've warmed up, take a few minutes to incorporate some other exercises; running in the shape of a figure of 8, taking large bounding steps on the toes, and also side cross-over steps (stepping one foot forwards and then backwards). These exercises get the ankle warmed up in multidirectional movements.

*None of these exercises should cause any pain, stiffness or swelling.
If so, please consult with your physiotherapist.*

Chronic swelling reduction



- **Rock walking, + stationary bike:** These exercises make the large leg muscles work hard, which assists in improving circulation, and therefore reduces swelling.

Stretching



- **Calf stretch:** Stand facing a wall and stretch your foot out from under you, keeping your knee straight and your heel on the floor. You should feel the stretch to the back of the calf – this is a **Gastrocnemius** stretch. Hold for 30 seconds.

- Now bend the knee and sit down into the stretch, keeping the heel on the floor - this is a **Soleus** stretch. Hold for 30 seconds.



- **Japanese sitting:** Sit back on your heels, feeling a stretch along the shin and front of the ankle. Hold for 30 seconds.

*None of these exercises should cause any pain, stiffness or swelling.
If so, please consult with your physiotherapist.*