

ANKLE SPRAINS

Ankle sprains involve injury of the ligaments of the ankle and are extremely common. An ankle sprain can occur from participating in high level sports, to tripping on an uneven surface while walking out to get the mail.

By rolling the ankle in one direction, it stretches the ligaments on the other side, causing them to stretch and sometimes tear. The most common form of ankle sprain is an **inversion** injury (rolling the foot in), therefore causing injury to the ligaments on the outside of the ankle. Damage occurs when the ligaments are stretched beyond their normal length and can't withstand the forces placed on them. The extent of injury can vary and is generally classified into 3 grades:

Grade 1: Stretching of the ligament

Grade 2: Partial Rupture of the ligament

Grade 3: Complete rupture of the ligament

Symptoms may be immediate or delayed and can include:

- Difficulty/Inability to weight-bear
- Pain
- Swelling/bruising
- Decreased movement
- Altered sensation

How to treat:

Generally, the higher the grade of injury, the more significant the swelling and bruising will be. Early intervention can decrease recovery time and assist in return to sport and daily activities. Assessment with a physiotherapist can use clinical testing to determine the grade of injury, and assist in pain management and rehabilitation. This may include:

- Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation
- Taping
- Crutches if necessary
- Hand on modalities - Massage and mobilisation
- Referral for X-Ray if necessary
- Electrotherapy modalities
- Prescription and fitting of a brace if necessary
- A rehabilitation program to restore strength, balance and coordination in an aim to return to sport and regular daily activities

If untreated, an ankle sprain can cause issues with stability and pain in the future.



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