

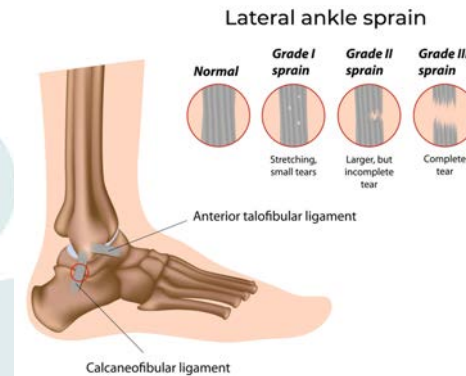
**PATIENT
INFORMATION
LEAFLET**

Ankle sprain

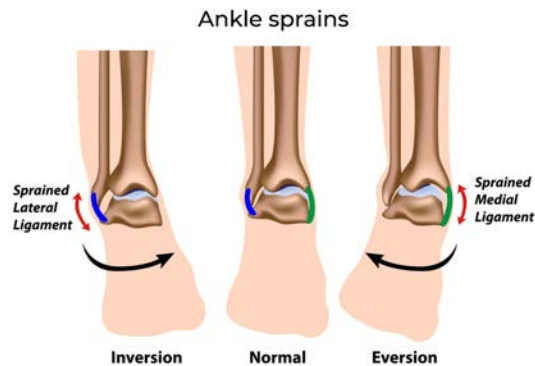
Airedale NHS Foundation Trust
Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Bradford District and Craven Clinical Commissioning Group

Introduction

"Ankle sprain" is the term used when one of the ankle ligaments (rope like structure that provide strength and stability to the ankle joint) has been stretched or damaged. These injuries are extremely common. whilst most people with an acute ankle sprain will return to normal function and sporting activities within a few weeks' others may take 6-8 weeks or longer before full function is restored.



Ankle sprains vary in severity and therefore return to sport times also vary. Once you are able to complete the above exercises pain free you are ready to start sport specific, NON-CONTACT, training. Only when you pain free during this step would a return to full contact be advised.



In a small number of people further investigations are needed. If you are unable to progress through the phases described above then you need to make an appointment with your GP. Your GP has the option to refer you to a specialist MSK clinic where specialist advice can be obtained.

Investigations of ankle sprains

Often simple sprains to the ankle do not require investigations. Occasionally, it may be necessary to perform an X-ray to ensure you have not fractured your ankle. Sometimes further imaging of your ankle will be needed to investigate for more complicated ankle sprains.

Self-management of an ankle sprain

During the first few days it is important to control swelling and pain. Pain killers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen are important.

- **Rest.** Reduce the amount of weight you put through your foot. Do not stop using your ankle completely; you should keep it moving as much as your pain allows.
- **Ice.** Wrap crushed ice or a bag of frozen vegetables in a tea-towel and apply it to the swollen area for 15 minutes every 2-3 hours. Do not apply ice if you are diabetic, have poor circulation or sensation in your legs, or the skin is broken.
- **Compression.** Use compression bandaging (e.g. tubigrip).
- **Elevate.** Keep the foot elevated (e.g. on a foot stool) when sat down. It is important to start moving the ankle as early as pain allows. Gentle range of movement exercises are key. Slowly progress through the following exercises. If your pain/swelling gets worse then move back a step.

Treatment of ankle sprains (early exercises)

Exercise 1: Ankle flexion and extension



- While sitting or lying down on your back.
- Bend your ankles to move your foot upwards or towards the direction of your knees then bend your ankle to point your feet away.

Exercise 2: Ankle inversion and eversion



- Sitting with your leg straight turn your feet in towards each other.
- Then turn them away from each other.

Exercise 3: Ankle Circles



- While sitting or lying down on your back.
- Draw circles with your ankle.

Exercise 4: Ankle Flexion - Exercise Band



- Start by lying on your back or sitting.
- Bend your knee of the affected side.
- Place a looped elastic band around both your feet.
- Next, pull the foot of the target ankle up towards the knee and pull the band.
- The other foot doesn't move, it just acts as an anchor.

Exercise 4: Ankle Eversion - Exercise Band



- Start by lying on your back or sitting.
- Place a looped elastic band around both your feet.
- Next, turn your target ankle away from the other foot and pull the band.
- The other foot doesn't move, it just acts as an anchor.

Exercise 4: Ankle Inversion - Exercise Band



- Start by lying on your back or sitting.
- Cross your unaffected leg over the unaffected leg.
- Place a looped elastic band around both your feet.
- Next, turn your target ankle away from the other foot and pull the band.

Exercise 5: Seated Heel Raises



- Sit towards the edge of a chair with your feet flat on the floor.
- Lift your heels up so that you are on your toes.
- Return to start and repeat.

Exercise 6: Heel Raises



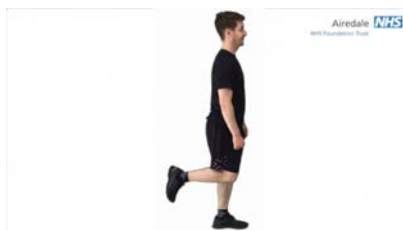
- Stand with your feet slightly apart and parallel.
- Place your hands on the wall or a chair for balance.
- Raise your heels as high as you can. Return.

Exercise 7: Single Leg Heel Raises



- Put your hand on a wall or other stable surface for balance.
- While standing on one leg, raise up on your toes as you lift your heel off the ground.
- Keep your knee straight.

Exercise 8: Single Leg Balance



- Stand on one leg.
- Hold your balance in this position.
- Perform this next to a table or other sturdy object.

Exercise 9: Single Leg Balance – Unstable Surface



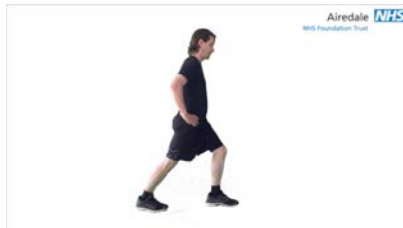
- Stand on top of a balance pad/ pillow/seat cushion or other unstable surface.
- Balance on one leg and hold in this position.
- For safety perform this next to a table or other sturdy object.

Exercise 10: Single Leg Mini Squat



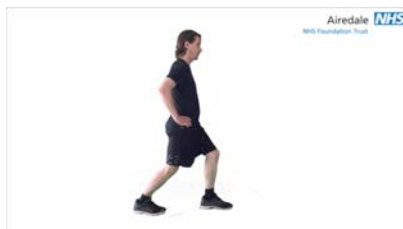
- Stand on one leg with the other leg stretched out in front of you.
- Your heel should be slightly off the ground.
- Slowly bend the knee going into a single leg squat position.
- ALL of your weight should be on this leg.
- Return to the starting position.

Exercise 11: Calf Stretch



- Stand with your injured leg back
- In a step standing position
- Stretch your leg keeping your knee straight
- Feel the stretch in the back of your calf. Hold for 30 seconds

Exercise 12: Calf Stretch (Soleus)



- Standing with your injured leg back – with your knee slightly bent.
- In a step standing position
- Stretch your lower calf keeping your knee bent.
- Feel the stretch in the lower calf. Hold for 30 seconds

What next?

If you are still experiencing symptoms despite following the above advice, it is important you seek advice from your GP. Your GP may decide to refer you to the musculoskeletal clinic or to a physiotherapist.