ANKLE SPRAIN CARE

QUICK TIPS FOR A SPEEDY RECOVERY

- In Australia, ankle injuries are quite prevalent, particularly among those engaged in sports.
- Ankle sprains alone account for about 15% of all sports-related injuries, and they are a frequent cause of visits to the Emergency Department, making up roughly 5% of such visits annually.
- The complexity of the ankle joint, which includes multiple ligaments and tendons, contributes to the risk of not only acute injuries but also chronic conditions like ankle instability if not properly treated.
- These injuries are most common during activities that involve running, jumping, or sudden changes in direction.
- In Australia, sports with the highest incidence of ankle injuries include *netball, basketball, soccer, and Australian Rules football.
- An ankle sprain involves a tear in the ligament, while an ankle strain occurs due to a tear in the muscle.
- Ankle sprains are classified by severity, ranging from grade 1 (mild, with no major structural damage) to grade 3 (severe, involving a complete rupture of the ligament).
- Once an ankle has been sprained, it is more susceptible to future sprains. Recurrent ankle sprains increase the risk of developing ankle osteoarthritis.



10 STEPS TO PREVENT AN ANKLE SPRAIN

1. Strengthen Ankle Muscles
2. Improve Balance and Coordination
3. Wear Supportive Footwear
4. Warm-Up Before Activities
5. Be Cautious on Uneven Surfaces
6. Use Proper Techniques
7. Stay Conditioned
8. Rest and Recover
9. Don't push through pain.
10. Consider Taping or Bracing





UNDERSTANDING THE PHASES

ACUTE PHASE



- Occurs within the first 1-2 weeks after an ankle sprain.
- It is characterized by significant pain, swelling, heat, redness, bruising, and a loss of function, making movement and weight-bearing difficult.
- The focus during this phase is on reducing pain and swelling, protecting the ankle, and preventing further damage, typically through Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation (RICE).

SUBACUTE PHASE



- Beginning after the first 2 weeks and lasting up to 6 weeks, this phase involves the body's repair of damaged tissues.
- Swelling and pain decrease and the ankle starts to regain its range of motion, balance, and strength.
- The focus shifts to rehabilitation, with gentle exercises to restore mobility, followed by strengthening and balance exercises, preparing the ankle for a gradual return to normal activities.

CHRONIC PHASE

- Occurring beyond 6 weeks if symptoms persist, this phase involves ongoing pain, instability, or swelling, often due to incomplete healing or recurrent sprains.
- The focus is on targeted treatment, including advanced rehabilitation, bracing, or medical intervention, to fully restore function and prevent long-term issues like chronic instability or osteoarthritis.

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