



Ankle Sprains

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Ankle sprains are among the most common orthopedic injuries sustained by physically active people. Ankle sprains often occur when a person runs or jumps and lands on an uneven surface. For example, a basketball player may often suffer an ankle sprain when they jump for a rebound and land on another player's foot.

An ankle sprain involves an injury to one or more ligaments of the ankle joint. Ligaments are bands of tough tissue that connect bone to bone and provide support and control excessive movement within a joint. One or more ligaments are put on an excessive stretch that stretches, partially tears, or completely tears the ligament(s) when an ankle sprain occurs. A person with this type of injury will often have swelling of the ankle, pain, and depending on the severity of the sprain, be unable to bear weight on the affected leg.

Ankle sprains can be divided up into three main types: Inversion or lateral sprains, eversion or medial sprains, and “high ankle” or syndesmodic sprains. Inversion ankle sprains are by far the most common and occur when an individual inverts (rolls inward) their foot. This sudden movement can damage the ligaments on the lateral (outside) portion of the ankle. Medial ankle sprains occur when an individual everts (rolls outward) their foot. When this occurs damage to the ligament complex on the medial (inside) portion of the ankle occurs. “High ankle” sprains occur due primarily to a twisting force applied to the foot. This motion can cause ligament and other tissue damage to the structures at the top of the ankle and even involve tissue up the lower leg.

Initial treatment for an ankle sprain involves RICE (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation) and protecting the area from re-injury or further injury (use of brace and/or crutches as needed). X-rays are sometimes important to rule out a fracture. Rehabilitation for ankle sprains usually follows a progression starting with range of motion activities and continuing to strengthening exercises to proprioceptive (balance) exercises to more functional, activity specific exercises. Strengthening and balance exercises are important for limiting/preventing future ankle sprains even after the injured area is pain free.

If you suffer an ankle sprain a physical therapist or an athletic trainer can help provide the proper treatment and guide you through the rehabilitative process.

For more information on ankle sprains go to:

http://physicaltherapypctc.com/Sports_Medicine_Information/Ankle_Sprain.pdf