

Ankle Rehabilitation



DR. HO

The rehabilitation of ankle sprains is divided into 5 phases.

Phase I (3-7 days)

ACTIVITIES

- PRICE (Protect, Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation)
- Early motion of the ankle

GOALS

- Pain management
- Reduction of swelling
- Some return of motion

ALPHABET ANKLE EXERCISE

- Write the capital letters of the alphabet with your big toe by moving the ankle.
 - Only move to the point of a good stretch.
 - Some discomfort is normal, but you should

not feel sharp pain.



Phases 2 and 3 (1-3 weeks)

When your ankle swelling has improved, and you can stand and walk without too much pain, it is time to move into Phase 2 rehabilitation.

ACTIVITIES

- More range-of-motion exercises
- Some strengthening and balance training exercises

EXERCISE GUIDELINES

- Start with the stretching exercises, and then move into the strengthening and balance training exercises as you continue to improve.

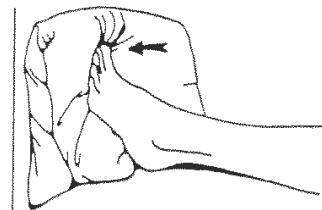
- Try to get to the point of doing all the Phase 2 and 3 exercises, but if a new exercise causes pain, stop the exercise and try again after a few days.
- Do the exercises used for calf (gastrocnemius-soleus) stretching and strengthening (found in the Achilles tendinopathy handout) as well as the ankle-specific exercises here.

ANKLE RANGE OF MOTION

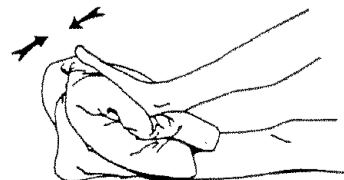
- While sitting on the floor or lying on your back with your legs straight in front of you, slowly move your ankle, pointing your toes up towards your head, down away from your head, in towards the other foot, out away from the other foot, and around-and-around in circles.
- Keep all the motion in the ankle, while keeping the leg and knee still.
- Initially, move gently, but as your symptoms improve, make the movements more firm.
- Repeat the exercise 10 times in each direction.
- Do this at least twice a day.

ISOMETRIC STRENGTHENING

- Using a wall or some other immovable object, perform light strengthening exercises.



Plantar flexion (push down with the foot)

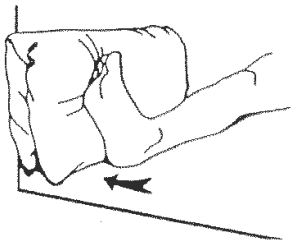


Dorsiflexion (resist upward motion with the other foot)

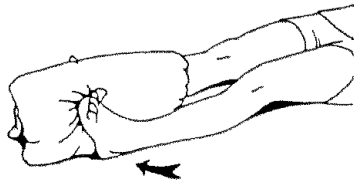
If you have any problems or questions, please call your doctor's office (8am-5pm).

Answering service for after hours.

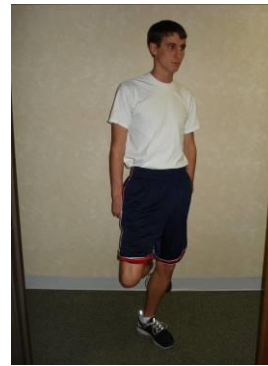
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Eversion (out)



Inversion (in)



STEPS

- Stand in front of a set of stairs, and slowly step up onto the first step with the leg you plan to exercise.
- Once both feet are on the step, slowly step back down, keeping your weight on the exercising foot, on the first step.
- Relax and take a deep breath. This is one repetition.
- Do 3 sets of 10 repetitions, on each leg, every day.



DYNAMIC SINGLE-LEG BALANCE

- This is very similar to the single-leg balance exercise above, except while balancing on one leg, reach in front of you with the arm on the same side as the exercising leg and allow the exercising knee to bend.
- Balance, reach out, hold for 5 seconds, then slowly return to the starting position, relax and take a deep breath. This is one repetition.
- Do 2 sets of 10 repetitions for each leg every day.
- Once this becomes easier, try reaching across your body for the chair next to your non-exercising leg.



SINGLE LEG BALANCE

- Stand and try to balance on the exercising leg without any support (keep a chair next to the non-exercising leg to use for balance as needed).
- Hold this position for 30 seconds, then relax and take a deep breath. This is one repetition.
- Do 2 sets of 3 repetitions for each leg, every day.
- Once the exercise becomes easier to do with the exercising foot flat on the floor, try lifting the heel slightly off the floor.
- Also, do this exercise with your eyes open at first. As it gets easier, try the exercise with your eyes closed.
- Once that gets easier, do this exercise while standing on a folded towel or pillow.

HOPPING/JUMPING

- Once you can do the above exercises without much of a problem, try hopping (initially on both legs, then later only on one leg) across the room and back. Then repeat the exercise using the other leg. This is one repetition.
- Do 2 sets of 3 repetitions for each leg every day.
- Make sure that the path you are taking is free of obstacles or loose carpeting or rugs.
- Once the exercise becomes easier, perform the exercise jumping as high as you can each time you move forward, as opposed to just hopping.

- Make sure that you land softly, bending at both the ankle and knee. Avoid landing hard onto your feet and heels.

Phases 4 and 5

ACTIVITIES

- Gradual return to jogging, running, jumping rope, agility training drills, non-contact activities and drills, and participating in sports

GUIDELINES

- Once you are completely free of pain, swelling, or other symptoms, and you can perform the phase 1 through 3 exercises well, you are ready to move into phase 4 and gradually return to training and participation.
- Particular attention should be given to the balance exercises above.
- But the most important thing to remember is that you continue to be at risk for re-injuring your ankle. So, progress gradually and at your own pace.

Excerpted from the premier patient guide to sports injuries, *100 Questions & Answers About Your Sports Injury*. Howard TM, **Ho GWK**, Lewis J. *100 Questions & Answers About Your Sports Injury*. Sudbury: Jones and Bartlett Publishers 2008.



**Stronger
starts
here.**

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