

## Children's Physiotherapy Service Patient Information

### Ankle sprain/ injury

#### What is an ankle sprain?



A sprain is when you over-stretch the soft tissues that hold the ankle bones together (ligaments).  
This usually happens if you roll, twist or turn your ankle in an awkward way.

#### Symptoms



- Ache or pain
- Weakness
- Swelling
- Bruising
- Cannot put full weight on the ankle
- Cannot use normally

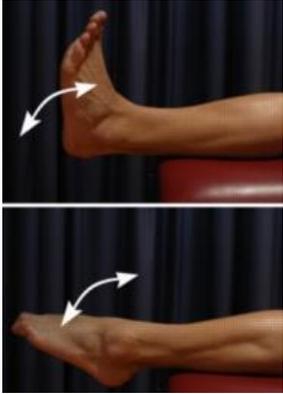
#### Treatment for the first 2-3 days

##### Protection



Protect from further injury. For example use a support or high-top lace up shoes.

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| <p><b>Rest</b></p>           | <p>Stop exercise and activity for first 2-3 days only.</p>  |
| <p><b>Ice</b></p>           | <p><b>Use ice for up to 20 minutes every 2-3 hours:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use an ice pack or bag of frozen vegetables</li> <li>• Wrap in a damp towel</li> <li>• You can refreeze refreeze the vegetables and use again <b>but do not eat.</b></li> <li>• Do not leave on whilst sleeping</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Compression</b></p>  | <p>Wrap a bandage or stocking on the ankle for support and help with swelling.<br/>Make sure it is snug but not too tight<br/>Take off at night and bed time</p>  |
| <p><b>Elevation</b></p>    | <p>When sitting support the ankle above the hip as much as possible.</p>  |
| <p><b>Medication</b></p>   | <p><b>Speak to a pharmacist.</b><br/>They may suggest:<br/>Pain relief such as paracetamol and ibuprofen for the swelling.<br/>Do not take ibuprofen for first 48 hours as can slow the healing.</p>  |

| <b>Exercises for the first 2 weeks</b>  |  |
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|    | <p>Complete these 4 exercises three times a day</p> <p>This will help your child's ankle from getting stiff, weak and reduce pain and swelling</p>   |
| <p><b>Exercise 1, bending and straightening the ankle:</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Point your toes away from your body as far as you can</li> <li>• Then pull them back towards your body as far as you can</li> <li>• Do this 10-15 times slowly and repeat 1-2 times</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Exercise 2, rolling the ankle:</b></p>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sit with your foot on the floor</li> <li>• Lift the sole of your foot inwards</li> <li>• Lift the sole of your foot outwards</li> <li>• Do this 10-15 times slowly and repeat 1-2 times</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Exercise 3, turning the ankle</b></p>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn your foot in a circle 10-15 times one way</li> <li>• Repeat the other direction</li> <li>• Do this 10-15 times slowly and repeat 1-2 times</li> </ul> <p>Also practice making shapes such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lines</li> <li>• circles</li> </ul> |

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|---|---|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• letters of the alphabet. For example spell your name out using the big toe as a pencil.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Exercise 4, ankle stretch</b></p>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place a towel or exercise band around the bottom the foot</li> <li>• Pull towel up to feel a stretch in the calf with your hands</li> <li>• Hold for 30 seconds</li> <li>• Repeat 3 times</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Activity and sports</b></p>   |   |
| <br><br> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After the injury your child should return to school</li> <li>• You should tell your child's school they have sprained their ankle</li> <li>• They may benefit from wearing supportive high-top, lace up footwear outside the school uniform policy while recovering</li> <li>• They can return to sport and PE when they have full and painless movement and the ankle strength has returned</li> <li>• Your child should gradually return to activities including; high-impact activities such as running, jumping and hopping as comfort allows</li> <li>• It may take 6-8 weeks to get better and return to all sport and activities</li> </ul> |
|   |   |

## How long will the ankle take to get better?

Most ankle sprains get better in 6-8 weeks but it can take up to 12 weeks to fully recover (NHS and NICE)

### Further advice



### If after 5-7 days your child has problems with:

- Weight-bearing and walking
- Worsening pain or swelling

Please contact 111 or GP for further advice.

### If after two weeks your child is unable to:

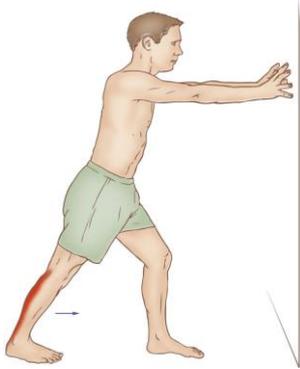
- Put full weight on the ankle
- Move the ankle fully
- Complete all the exercises

Please contact the GP for further advice possible physiotherapy referral.

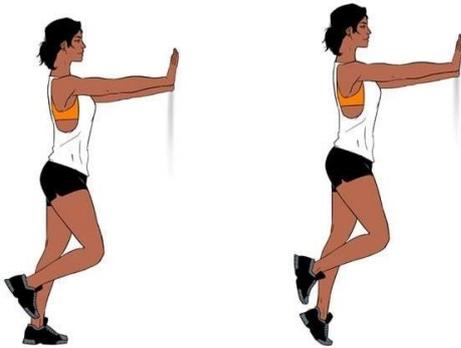
### If after 8-weeks your child is unable to:

- Stand on the injured ankle for at least 10-30 seconds and balance.
- Return to P.E and sport

Please contact the GP for further advice possible physiotherapy referral.

| <b>Exercises for 2-6 weeks after ankle sprain</b>  |  |
|--|--|
|   | <p>Help your child with the following 4 exercises:</p>   |
| <p><b>Exercise 1, ankle stretch</b></p>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stand with one leg forward and both feet facing forwards</li> <li>• Keep back knee straight</li> <li>• Slowly bend front knee forwards</li> <li>• Stop when you feel a stretch in the calf</li> <li>• Hold for 30 seconds</li> <li>• Repeat 3 times on both leg</li> </ul> <p>Do this twice a day</p> |
| <p><b>Exercise 2, two-leg calf raise</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stand holding on to a stable surface. For example secure worktop</li> <li>• Slowly go up onto your tip-toes and back down</li> <li>• Do this 10-15 times slowly</li> <li>• Gradually increase until able to do three sets of 10-15</li> </ul> <p>Do this 3-4 times a week</p>                         |

### Exercise 2, one-leg calf raise



### Only do this exercise if able to do 3 sets of 10-15 of Exercise 2 (two-leg calf raise)

- Stand holding on for balance to a stable surface
- Stand on one leg
- Slowly go up onto your tip-toes and back down
- Do this 10-15 times slowly on both legs
- Gradually increase until able to do three sets of 10-15

Do this 3-4 times a week

### Balancing exercises with supervision



Stand near a stable surface in case you lose your balance.

#### 1. Stand on one leg

- Try to hold for 10-30 seconds
- Do this 3 times on both legs

#### 2. Repeat balance exercise 1 with your eyes closed

#### 3. Repeat balance exercise 1 standing on a pillow/cushion (eyes open)



**When to contact the Physiotherapy team at the Lighthouse Child Development Centre on 03442573952.**



- If your child is unable to put their full weight on their ankle after 2 weeks
- If the ankle is still very painful and swollen after 8 weeks
- If they are not able to complete the exercises, or return to P.E and sport after 8 weeks