

## Information following ankle injury

A sprained ankle is an injury to the ankle ligament. The injury is often sports-related. There is almost always a rupture of the band on the outside of the ankle, either complete or partial. The first signs of injury are pain and discoloration, caused by bleeding below the skin.

Ankle ligaments heal without surgery within 4-6 weeks. Pain and swelling will diminish over time. In some cases the recovery is rapid, while recovery may take several weeks for others. Swelling is often the last symptom to disappear, and may persist for several months.

### Treatment

Bleeding and swelling slow the healing of the injury. The best treatment during the first 48 hours is rest, elevation of the foot and repeated cooling. Lie on the couch with your foot elevated to the height of your heart, using pillows or a chair. Cool the ankle 4-6 times each day, about 15 min each time. Use a bag of frozen mixed vegetables (avoid direct contact with the skin, which may cause frostbite). Avoid unnecessary weight-bearing on the injured foot for two days; the only valid reason to leave the couch is to go to the bathroom!

Remember to wiggle your toes and bend your ankle joint to maintain circulation.

### Taping the ankle

We recommend that you tape the ankle when performing “at-risk” activities (playing sports or walking on uneven surfaces) for at least 3 months after the injury. Try to walk on the injured foot with a normal walking pattern. Avoid using crutches for a long period of time (preferably no more than 2-3 days).

### Rehabilitation

Athletes can exercise on a stationary bicycle after 3-4 days and jog on level ground after 6-7 days.

We encourage you to use a balance board during rehabilitation, 15 min. daily for six weeks. You can start practicing after about one week, when the swelling and pain are reduced. All exercise should be done without shoes. In the beginning, balance with both feet on the board simultaneously and your eyes open, later with only the injured foot on the board and your eyes open and, finally, with the injured foot on the board and your eyes closed. If you do not want to invest in a balance board, you can perform balance training by standing on a flat floor with your injured foot and keeping your eyes closed. Practicing a few minutes a day will improve function after a few weeks.

The purpose of balance training is to retrain the joint position sense, which is disturbed by the injury. Impaired joint sense combined with reduced band strength increases the risk of new ankle injury during the first 3-6 months.

### If you are not recovered

Using this treatment, the ankle should gradually improve within 1-2 weeks.

Some patients will, unfortunately, have chronic complaints after an ankle injury.

If you can't bear weight on the foot after 10 days due to swelling and pain, or if the foot is unstable several months after injury due to uneven weight-bearing, you should contact your GP.



trygghet når du trenger det mest