
A variety of braces and ankle supports are available. Be sure to contact the Pat Walker Health Center for assistance with your special needs. Exercises that strengthen the ligaments and tendons supporting the ankle can help prevent future injuries. Do not start these exercises until your ankle is healed and your doctor has released you.



Mission Statement

The Pat Walker Health Center, University Health Services provides professional and comprehensive medical care, mental health care, health education, and health promotion for a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff. We, the University Health Services Staff of the Pat Walker Health Center, have a commitment to physical, mental, spiritual, social, and emotional health, the highest standards of quality, and appreciation of the value of each individual. Through these endeavors we support the educational mission of the University of Arkansas and the growth of each individual.

Pat Walker Health Center University Health Services

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**Accreditation Association
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*A Member of
the Division of Student Affairs*



SPRAINED ANKLE



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SPRAINED ANKLE CARE

DEFINITION

Stretched or torn ligaments that usually involve the lateral or outside of the ankle, and occasionally a bone is cracked.

CAUSE

Traumatic, sudden injuries, usually the force of the body weight in the foot in a downward pointing, in-turned position, overcomes the structural strength of ligaments. May occur in the loss of balance or uneven surfaces or simply walking or running.

CLINICAL SIGNS

- Pain
- Swelling (immediate or delayed)
- Loss of function
- Bruising

COMPLICATIONS

- Loss of motion
- Chronic instability
- Arthritis

PREVENTION

People are more prone to ankle injuries if ankles are weak or unstable. After an injury to your ankle, reduce the risk of future injury by wearing high-topped supporting shoes – especially during activities that involve jumping, such as basketball and volleyball.

TREATMENT

Degree of Sprain – Mild (Grade I)

Signs and Symptoms - Little or no pain and swelling, stable for walking.

Treatment – RICE (Rest, Ice*, Compression**, Elevation) immediately, may begin normal activity rehabilitation after initial ice treatment, proceed as comfort warrants.

Degree of Sprain – Moderate (Grade II)

Signs and Symptoms – Some pain and swelling, pain with foot and ankle in motion; walking is possible but difficult.

Treatment – RICE and Stage I rehabilitation, proceed as comfort warrants.

Degree of Sprain – Severe (Grade III)

Signs and Symptoms – Severe and immediate pain and swelling; ankle is unstable. Ankle is unable to move or bear weight.

Treatment – RICE; proceed to Stage I when improved, consider intervention (fiberglass splint, cast surgery).

* Ice should be applied **to the skin** in a plastic bag for 20 minutes, up to each hour; after the initial pain has subsided, it may be used after activity as long as swelling persists; heat may aggravate swelling.

** With elastic (Ace) wrap – to prevent swelling.

Treatment Stage Goals:

- I:** Comfort, protection
- II:** Restore motion and function for normal activity
- III:** Strength, agility, endurance for sports activity

SPECIFICS

RICE (at least 4-7 times a day, for 1-2 days) may walk with crutches (weight on injured foot as tolerated).

Increase weight-bearing (walking) as tolerated; stretch* heel cord (Achilles tendon); active motions (rotate ankle, hold foot in towel and push toe out with gentle resistance); may bike or swim for cardiovascular exercise.

May jog when walking 1-2 miles is comfortable, advance to wind sprints, figure-of-8s, zigzag runs, toe raises (25 on both feet, 25 on injured side only, 25 hanging off step), hopping (on injured side), rope-skipping, heel and toe walking, balance practice (e.g., on a bongo board).

*Please refer to other stretching references.

Ask your clinician if you have questions during your evaluation.

FOLLOW-UP

Make a return visit if no improvement in 24-48 hours, or if incomplete resolution after 1 week.

