

# Ankle sprain

This leaflet offers more information about an ankle sprain. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your care.

## What is an ankle sprain and why have I got it?

An ankle sprain is one of the most common injuries to soft tissue (muscles and ligaments).

It happens when you move your foot more or differently to normal and accidentally stretch the soft tissue and ligaments supporting your ankle.

## What are the signs and symptoms?

- Pain
- Swelling
- Bruising
- Reduced range of movement.

## How long will it take to recover?

The initial pain usually settles after a few days.

The soft tissues normally take around six weeks to heal. This time will depend on how bad the original injury was and will vary from person to person. It can take a few months for your ankle to get completely back to normal.

If the pain and swelling hasn't got better at all within two weeks and you still can't put weight on your ankle, please seek further medical advice.

## What treatments are available?

Your GP may prescribe **pain killers**, which you should take at the recommended dose.

A **cold pack** (ice pack or frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel) can give short-term pain relief. Put the pack on the sore area for up to 10 minutes, every few hours. Do not keep the ice pack on for longer than this or fall asleep with it on, as this may cause an ice burn.

## Is there anything I can do to help myself?

### Rest

Try to rest the foot for the first 24-72 hours. However, it is also important to maintain flexibility in the ankle. To help the healing process and make sure your ankle doesn't become too stiff, gently move it, little and often, as much as is comfortable for you.

### Elevation

Support your leg on pillows to elevate your ankle higher than your hip. This will help reduce the swelling.

### Early movement and exercises

Try to put weight on your foot as soon as possible, to prevent the muscles around your foot and ankle becoming tight and weak and to stop your ankle stiffening up. Try to walk as normally as possible as this will also help your recovery.

Keep your ankle moving as much as your pain allows.

Once you have recovered, continue to keep your body healthy with exercise and strengthen your ankles to prevent future injuries.

If your symptoms get worse or do not improve, please seek further medical advice.

The sooner you start early exercise, the quicker your recovery will be. These simple exercises should increase your range of movement without increasing pain. Perform each exercise gently and slowly and only move as much as you feel comfortable to do.

Practise each exercise up to 10 times, two to three times a day.

**1. Point your foot up and down.**

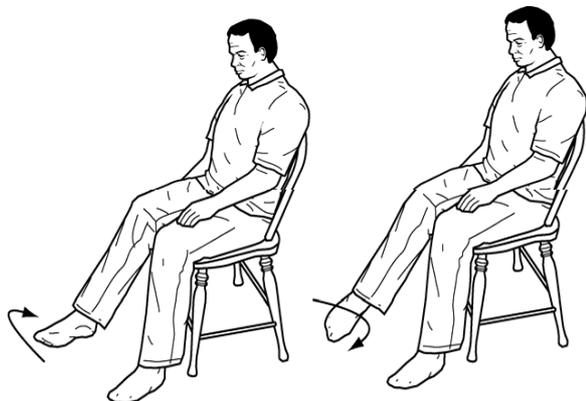


**2. Make circles with your foot. Change direction.**



**3. Place your foot on the floor.**

**Rock your foot from side to side, lifting the inner and then outer edge of your foot.**



**4. Sit with your leg straight out in front of you.**

**Put a towel round your foot and pull it up towards you.**

**Feel the stretch in the back of your calf.**



## How can I prevent further injury?

You are more likely to sprain your ankle if you have sprained it before. Be careful on uneven surfaces and going up and down stairs. Wear shoes that are flat and supportive, such as trainers.

## Useful sources of information

<http://www.csp.org.uk/your-health/conditions>

<https://www.arthritisresearchuk.org/Arthritis-information/Daily-Life/Pain-and-arthritis/Common-aches-and-pains.aspx>

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your back pain, please contact your physiotherapist on 020 8487 6022 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm). Alternatively contact us by email:

[WACCG.physiotherapyoutpatients@nhs.net](mailto:WACCG.physiotherapyoutpatients@nhs.net)

We are also on Twitter: @QMMSKphysio

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

## Additional services

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

### NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

**Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

**Tel:** 111



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