

Ankle Sprain

Most sprains are caused by rolling the foot inward. This can stretch or even tear the ligaments that help support the ankle and foot. Ligament damage can lead to instability of the ankle and frequent re-injury. Ankle sprains may take from 6 weeks to several months to heal. Early treatment, specific exercises and bracing can decrease the risk of re-injury. The information below can help speed up your recovery, decrease your pain and help prevent re-injury.

Early Treatment

R.I.C.E.

- **Rest:** Avoid painful activities to give your ankle time to heal. Limit your walking and other standing activities when your ankle is painful or swollen.
- **Ice:** Place a cold pack on your ankle for 15-20 minutes several times per day. Place a thin towel between your skin and the cold pack to prevent a rash or burn. Continue to ice 2-4 times per day as long as your ankle is warm, painful or swollen.
- **Compression:** Swelling is a normal response to an ankle sprain. Applying an ace bandage can help decrease the swelling and help the healing process. It is important to re-wrap the ace bandage on a regular basis starting at the toes and finishing well above the ankle. Avoid wrapping the ankle too tight. You should be able to easily put two fingers under the wrap.
- **Elevation:** Keep the ankle elevated above your heart as much as possible during the day. This will help decrease the swelling and speed the recovery.

Walking Aid: Use a walking aid like crutches, a cane, a walking stick or a walker until you can walk without a limp. Try to bear some weight on your injured ankle while using the walking aid if you can do so without increasing your pain.

Brace: Your doctor may give you a brace to wear for support while your ankle heals. Continue to wear this brace until your doctor directs otherwise. After the ankle has healed, ask your doctor if you should continue to wear the brace with activity.

Early Exercises: Do these exercises without increasing your pain or swelling.

Aerobic exercise: A stationary bike can be helpful in the healing process without adding stress to the ankle. Start with 10 minutes with low resistance.

Gentle range of motion: Repeat 2-4 times per day

- Circle the foot clockwise, and then counter clockwise 10 times each direction.
- Gently bring your toes and foot towards your shin and then point your foot and toes away. Repeat 10 times each direction.



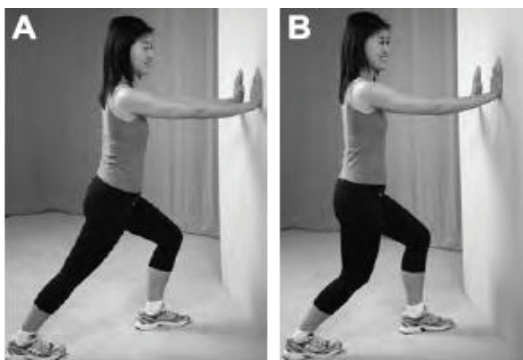
Calf Stretch

Sitting

Place a towel around the ball of your foot. Pull until you feel a stretch in your calf. Hold for 60 seconds, repeat 2-4 times per day. Do the standing stretch instead if you can stand without an increase in your pain.



Standing Calf Stretch



Stretch A: Place the leg you are stretching behind you. Keep your heel on the ground, knee straight and your toes pointed straight ahead. Lean forward until you feel a gentle stretch in your calf.

Stretch B: Start slightly closer to the wall. Keep your heel on the ground. Bend your back knee until you feel the stretch in the lower part of your calf. Hold 60 seconds, repeat 2-4 times per day.

Consult with your physical therapist or doctor if you experience an increase in your symptoms with recommended exercises, or if you develop new symptoms of numbness, tingling, or a spread of the pain. This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor. If you have questions or need more information about your medication, please speak to your pharmacist. Kaiser Permanente does not endorse the medications or products mentioned. Any trade names listed are for easy identification only.

Strengthening

Arch Raise in Sitting: Sit in a chair with both feet on the floor. Try to raise the arch of your foot while keeping your toes and heel on the floor. Work up to holding this position 30-60 seconds. Repeat 5 times.



Arch Raise in Standing: Progress this exercise to standing when you can stand on the involved leg without increased pain. Stand on both feet; try to raise the arch of your foot while keeping your toes and heel on the floor. Hold 30-60 seconds, repeat 5 times.

Tandem Standing

Stand next to a chair or wall with one foot in front of the other. Hold for 30-60 seconds. Repeat 5 times with the right foot forward and 5 times with the left foot forward.



Progress this exercise by:

- Standing on one foot keeping the arch of your foot raised.
- Turning your head left and right while maintaining your foot position and your balance.
- Closing your eyes while you maintain your foot position and your balance.

