



REHABILITATION EXERCISES FOR AN ANKLE SPRAIN

The right exercises will enable you to get back to sports or normal activity faster after an ankle sprain. These exercises are designed to restore your ankle's normal range of motion, strength, and coordination. Refer to the corresponding illustration for each exercise.

Range of motion

1. Hold an ice pack to your ankle for 20 minutes. Then trace the alphabet with you big toe while hanging your foot over the edge of a couch or table.

Strength

Start these strength exercises after you regain a normal range of motion. Use a loop of elastic band (a Theraband or bicycle inner tube) 3 feet long. Do 20 repetitions of each of the following exercises twice a day:

2. Hold one end of the elastic band and loop the other end around the ball of your foot. While pulling on the band, push against the band with your foot. Hold for three counts.
3. Loop the band around your forefoot and around a secure object off to the side. Sitting down and keeping your heel on the floor, swing your forefoot inward and hold three counts.
4. Loop one end of the band around a secure object, such as a table leg, and the other end around your forefoot. Pull your forefoot back toward your body. Hold for three counts.
5. Starting from the same position as in the previous exercises but with the band in the opposite direction, swing your forefoot outward and hold for three counts. When you can do exercises 2 through 5 easily and without pain, double the elastic band (make two loops) and do 10 repetitions of the same exercises twice a day.

6. Place the balls of your feet on a step and rise and stand on your toes. Do this with your feet pointing straight ahead, then inward, and then outward. Repeat 10 times in each position. Later, try this standing on one foot.

Coordination

7. Raise your uninjured foot and stand on the injured foot for 2 minutes. Do this five times a day. Later, do this with your eyes closed.

Normal Activity

When you can walk without pain or a limp, go on to jogging straight ahead on a smooth surface, and finally to figure-eight and zigzag running. If you can do figure-eight and zigzag running without pain, you are ready for full activities.

