

Ankle Sprain

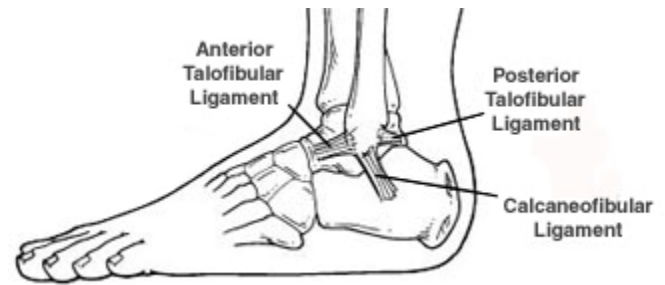
An ankle sprain is an injury to one or more ligaments in the ankle, usually on the outside of the ankle. Ligaments are bands of tissue, like rubber bands, that connect one bone to another and bind the joints together. In the ankle joint, ligaments provide stability by limiting side-to-side movement.

Some ankle sprains are much worse than others. The severity of an ankle sprain depends on whether the ligament is stretched, partially torn or completely torn, as well as on the number of ligaments involved. One ligament involved is a Grade I, 2 ligaments involved is a Grade II and 3 ligaments involved is a Grade III ankle sprain. Ankle sprains are **not** the same as strains, which affect muscles rather than ligaments.

What Causes a Sprained Ankle?

Sprained ankles often result from a fall, a sudden twist or a blow that forces the ankle joint out of its normal position. Ankle sprains commonly occur while participating in sports, wearing inappropriate shoes or walking or running on an uneven surface.

Sometimes ankle sprains occur because of weak ankles, a condition that some people are born with or previous ankle or foot injuries that have weakened the ankle.



Signs and Symptoms

The signs and symptoms of ankle sprains may include:

- Pain or soreness to the foot or ankle
- Bruising
- Stiffness in the joint
- Swelling
- Difficulty or inability to walk

Non-Surgical Treatment and Rehabilitation

- **Immobilization.** Depending on the severity of your injury, you may receive a short-leg cast, a walking boot or a brace to keep your ankle from moving. You may also need crutches.
- **Early Physical Therapy.**
- **Medications.** Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen, may be recommended to reduce pain and inflammation.
- **Icing.** You may be advised to ice your injury several times a day until the pain and swelling resolve. Wrap ice cubes in a thin towel. Do not put ice directly on your skin.
- **Compression Wraps.** To prevent further swelling, you may need to keep your ankle wrapped in an elastic bandage or stocking.

When is Surgery Indicated?

In more severe cases, surgery may be required to adequately treat an ankle sprain. Surgery often involves repairing the damaged ligament or ligaments.