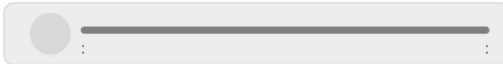


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Updated on November 4, 2025

Everything You Need to Know About Sprained Ankles

Rolled your ankle? Learn how to treat, strengthen, and prevent sprains with practical tips and expert advice from Summit Orthopaedics in Idaho Falls.

[Ankle](#)[Download Article PDF](#)

Have you ever stepped off a curb wrong or slipped on a slick surface and ended up rolling your ankle? Rolling or overstretching the ankles can end up being a sprain if the ligaments in your ankle are pulled hard enough. Sprained ankles are a popular problem—they can happen almost anywhere and to anyone, though they seem to be most common for athletes. Since ankle sprains typically tend to happen when you're running or jumping, volleyball, soccer, and football are the top sports where athletes are likely to experience an ankle sprain.

Levels of Ankle Sprains

There are three levels to how serious the sprain can be.

1. No ligaments in your ankle are torn and you are still able to walk. However, your ankle is experiencing swelling and stiffness.
2. Your ligaments are not completely torn, but walking is painful and the ankle is tender to the touch. Your ankle is also swollen and stiff.
3. There are complete tears in the ligaments which makes the ankle feel unstable, not allowing you to walk. You will feel intense pain with severe swelling and bruising.

No matter the severity of your sprain, you should treat your ankle right away.

At-Home Ankle Sprain Treatments

Staying off your ankle is the most important factor for a proper heal. We recommend using the R.I.C.E method of recovery, especially for mild to moderate ankle sprains.

- Rest. Take a break and lie back.
- Ice. Applying ice to your injury will lower the swelling.
- Compression. Compression will also reduce swelling by wrapping the injury—just don't wrap too tight!
- Elevation. As you rest, keep your ankle above the level of your heart to drain out excess fluid from your ankle.

You can also take over-the-counter pain medications, like ibuprofen, to alleviate your pain.

When to See a Doctor

If you cannot walk on your ankle and your pain feels extreme, it's time to go to the doctor. Your doctor can take an x-ray of your ankle (if the site isn't too swollen) and perform a physical exam to determine if any ligaments have been torn and how serious the injury is. You should also see your doctor if your pain continues and you fear your ankle is healing improperly. However, please note that injuries like these will take time to heal so you must be patient.

Strengthening an Injury

Though it may seem counter-intuitive, for your ankle to heal well and be strong enough to lift your body, you'll need to perform some stretches while you are recovering. You can use an elastic band on your ankle to pull it towards you or flex it back, you can write the alphabet in the air with your foot, or you can stand against a wall to stretch it.

Preventing a Sprained Ankle

You can't predict every time you are going to fall, but you can be ready in case it does. First, start by wearing supportive shoes and watching where you walk. For example, wearing heels when it's icy outside isn't the wisest choice. Instead, wear something sturdy, like boots. You can also prevent a sprained ankle during exercise by taking the time to warm up first. During your workout, pay attention to your body. If you feel worn out or in pain, stop—you don't want to put yourself at risk for an injury.

Sprained ankles are common, so if you get one, don't panic. We are here to help you heal.

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