

# Swollen Ankles: Six Causes, One Call

The six things that swell feet and ankles, what to try at home first, and the single sign that means stop waiting and call.

✓ **Verified against published guidance** from Cleveland Clinic, Mayo Clinic & Harvard Health · sources below

**Mayo Clinic says to see a healthcare professional right away for shortness of breath, an irregular heartbeat or chest pain, which can be signs of fluid building up in the lungs. Cleveland Clinic says swelling throughout the body from an allergic reaction, especially around the face or mouth, is a medical emergency: call 911 or your local emergency number.**

## ✓ Do This

### Elevate And Recheck Tomorrow

- Prop the feet up on a stool
- Gone by morning is reassuring
- Harvard says hours, not days

**COACH'S TIP** Harvard puts rest and elevation first.

### Read Your Own Medicine List

- Blood pressure medicines
- Estrogens and some diabetes drugs
- NSAIDs and steroid medicines

**COACH'S TIP** Mayo Clinic lists every one of these.

### Cut The Salt You Add

- Chips, processed meat, cheese
- A low salt diet is standard advice
- Canned soup and fast food

**COACH'S TIP** Cleveland Clinic names those foods.

### Move The Legs Every Hour

- Walk rather than stand still
- Exercise pumps fluid back up
- Take breaks when travelling

**COACH'S TIP** Harvard says exercise the legs.

### Ask Before Buying Compression

- Support stockings can help
- Fit matters more than price
- Ask your provider before using them

**COACH'S TIP** Cleveland Clinic says ask first.

### Book A Visit If It Persists

- Lasting more than a few days
- Swelling that came on suddenly
- Skin that holds a dimple

**COACH'S TIP** Harvard names all three triggers.

## ✗ Do Not

### Do Not Ignore One Swollen Leg

- New swelling on one side only
- A clot in a leg vein is possible
- Calf pain alongside it

**COACH'S TIP** Harvard says always bring it in.

### Do Not Wait Through Breathlessness

- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- An irregular heartbeat

**COACH'S TIP** Mayo says get seen right away.

### Do Not Diagnose Yourself

- Heart, liver and kidney all swell legs
- Blood and urine tests decide
- Harvard says do not self diagnose

**COACH'S TIP** Those are Harvard's words.

### Do Not Borrow Water Pills

- Diuretics are prescription only
- Wrong cause means wrong drug
- Treatment depends on the cause

**COACH'S TIP** Cleveland lists them as prescribed.

### Do Not Sit Or Stand All Day

- Long unbroken periods cause it
- A short walk breaks the cycle
- Both sitting and standing count

**COACH'S TIP** Cleveland names both habits.

### Do Not Skip The Skin Check

- Wounds that heal slowly
- Pressure wounds on swollen skin
- Infections that spread

**COACH'S TIP** Cleveland lists these as risks.

## THE NUMBERS BEHIND THIS SHEET

Three figures worth knowing

**Hours** Harvard: propped up feet should settle in hours

**1 leg** New one sided swelling always earns a call

**911** Allergic swelling of the face or mouth