

I Think I Broke a Bone in My Foot or Ankle

Understanding Foot & Ankle Fractures

What Is Causing Foot & Ankle Fracture Pain?

A fracture is a break in one or more of the many bones of the foot or ankle, caused either by direct trauma — a fall, twist, or impact — or by repetitive stress over time, known as a stress fracture.

What Does It Feel Like?

- Immediate, sharp pain at the site of injury
- Swelling and bruising
- Difficulty or inability to bear weight
- Sometimes a visible deformity
- Pain that worsens with movement or direct pressure on the bone

What Causes It?

- Falls or missteps off a curb or stair
- Sports collisions or motor vehicle accidents
- Repetitive high-impact activity — stress fractures are common in runners and military recruits
- Osteoporosis or otherwise weakened bone

What Makes It Worse?

- Continuing to bear weight before the fracture is stable
- Inadequate immobilization (cast, boot, or brace)
- Returning to high-impact activity too early in the healing process

When Should I Be Concerned?

- Visible deformity
- Complete inability to bear any weight
- Numbness, or a foot that appears pale or cold (possible circulation or nerve involvement)
- An open wound near the fracture site
- These require immediate medical attention and imaging

The Good News

Once a fracture is medically cleared and stable — whether in a cast, boot, or after surgery — physical therapy is essential to restore range of motion, strength, and safe, confident walking mechanics.

Most simple foot and ankle fractures heal in **6 to 8 weeks**, with PT-guided rehab continuing for several weeks afterward to fully restore function.

This information is for general educational purposes only and is not a substitute for a professional evaluation. Call us today — we have immediate openings with no waitlist.

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