

I Tore a Ligament in My Ankle

Understanding Ankle Ligament Tears

What Is Causing Ankle Ligament Pain?

The ankle is stabilized by several key ligaments — the ATFL, CFL, deltoid, and syndesmotic ligaments — and a sudden twist, roll, or impact can overstretch or tear one or more of them, ranging from a mild stretch (Grade I) to a complete tear (Grade III).

What Does It Feel Like?

- Pain and swelling localized to the injured ligament
- Bruising that may spread over the following days
- A feeling of instability or the ankle “giving way”
- Difficulty bearing weight, depending on the grade of the tear

What Causes It?

- Rolling the ankle inward or outward
- Landing awkwardly from a jump
- Sudden direction changes during sport
- Uneven walking or playing surfaces
- Prior ankle sprains, which significantly increase the risk of re-injury

What Makes It Worse?

- Weight-bearing on uneven ground before healing
- Returning to activity before the ligament is fully healed
- Not using a brace or supportive taping during early recovery

When Should I Be Concerned?

- Complete inability to bear weight
- Obvious deformity of the joint
- Numbness or loss of pulse in the foot
- Rapidly spreading, significant bruising
- These findings need imaging to rule out an associated fracture

The Good News

Most ankle ligament tears — even higher-grade tears — heal well with dedicated rehab focused on protecting the joint early, then rebuilding strength, balance, and proprioception to prevent future injury.

Recovery ranges from **1 to 3 weeks for Grade I**, **4 to 6 weeks for Grade II**, and **8 to 12 weeks for Grade III** tears, sometimes longer if surgery is required.

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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