

Treating Ankle Sprain

Treatment will depend on how badly you sprained your ankle. For a severe sprain, healing may take 3 months or more.

Right After the Injury: Use R.I.C.E.

Rest: At first, keep weight off the ankle as much as you can. You may be given crutches to help you walk without putting weight on the ankle.

Ice: Put an ice pack on the ankle for 15 minutes. Remove the pack and wait at least 30 minutes. Repeat for up to 3 days. This helps reduce swelling.

Compression: To reduce swelling and keep the joint stable, you may need to wrap the ankle with an elastic bandage. For more severe sprains, you may need an ankle brace or a cast.

Elevation: To reduce swelling, keep your ankle raised above your heart when you sit or lie down.



Medication

An over-the-counter oral non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication, such as ibuprofen, motrin, or aleve may be helpful to relieve the pain and reduce swelling.

Contrast Baths

After 3 days, soak your ankle in warm water for 30 seconds, then in cool water for 30 seconds. Go back and forth for 5 minutes. Doing this every 2 hours will help keep the swelling down.

Exercises

After about 2–3 weeks, you may be given exercises to strengthen the ligaments and muscles in the ankle. Doing these exercises will help prevent another ankle sprain. Exercises may include standing on your toes and then on your heels and doing ankle curls.

Ankle Curls

- Sit on the edge of a sturdy table or lie on your back.
- Pull your toes toward you. Then point them away from you. Repeat for 2–3 minutes.

