

Emergency Department

Self Treatment of Acute Ankle Sprains



An ankle sprain is a common injury of the soft tissues around the ankle joint. We recommend that you follow the advice in this leaflet to help speed your recovery.

In the first few days:

- Elevate your leg to improve swelling.
- Ice may help to ease pain.
- Over the counter medication can be helpful. We recommend paracetamol as first line pain relief. **(Always check the label before use.)**
- A tubigrip or support may help relieve pain in the short term.
- Short term rest and using a walking aid may help reduce pain.
- Avoid any unnecessary treatment or investigations.

Longer term management:

- An active approach including movement and exercise is beneficial. Try to walk as normally as possible. A walking aid may help. Try to strike the ground with your heel first, and push off with the toes.
- Return to normal activities as quickly as pain allows.
- Fear can cause a barrier to recovery. Being positive improves quality of life and can improve outcome!
- General exercise will improve blood flow to the injured area. This will improve function, encourage recovery and reduce the need for pain medication. Try to continue regular exercise such as walking, swimming or cycling as you are able. When you are able to hop, on the affected leg, you can begin gentle jogging!
- There is strong evidence supporting the use of exercises. This will help improve movement, strength and balance which is commonly reduced after an ankle injury. Do these regularly and repeat as often as you are able.

Exercises:

Exercise 1



Regularly move your ankle in all directions.

Exercise 2



In standing transfer your weight from side to side. Weight bear on the affected side as able.

Exercise 3



Stand on the affected leg. Hold onto something initially for support.

Progress to standing on one leg with your eyes closed.

Exercises continued.....



Exercise 4



Rise up onto your tiptoes as many times as you are able.

Hold on for support if required.

Exercise 5



Progress to single heel raises once able.

It is common for soft tissue injuries to take 6 – 8 weeks to recover. If you feel you are not recovering and wish further advice, contact the musculoskeletal helpline. The number is detailed on the back page of this booklet. This service can refer to physiotherapy if appropriate.

Useful Information and Contacts:



NHS Forth Valley website has lots of useful information and contacts:

www.nhsforthvalley.com/health-services/know-who-to-turn-to-when-you-are-ill

GP contact details can be found at www.nhsforthvalley.com/health-services/local-service-finder/ or by calling NHS 24 on 111.

NHS Inform provides health information and details of services and support in your area. Call free on 0800 224488 or visit www.nhsinform.co.uk



For people with mental health or psychological problems and in crisis, support is available by phoning NHS 24 on 111, Samaritans on 116 123 or Breathing Space on 0800 83 85 87.

The Musculoskeletal (MSK) Helpline is a service for people experiencing MSK disorders such as back pain or sports injuries. Phone **0800 917 9390** (9am to 5pm Mon to Fri). Calls are free.



NHS 24

Call the free national NHS helpline on 111

Follow us on:



@NHSForthValley



NHS Forth Valley