

Patient Information

Ankle Avulsion Fracture

Department of Trauma and
Orthopaedic Surgery



What fracture have I got?

You have an avulsion fracture to your ankle, which is treated like a soft tissue injury (sprain) to your ankle. This can take around six months to heal and during this time, pain and swelling can be ongoing. Take painkillers, such as paracetamol and/or ibuprofen, as required.

You may walk on the foot as comfort allows although you may find it easier to walk with crutches in the early stages. If you have been given a boot to wear, it is for your comfort only and will not aid healing. The swelling is often worse at the end of the day; elevating your foot will help.

Initial advice

Cold packs

A cold pack, such as an ice pack or bag of frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel, can provide short-term pain relief. Apply this to the sore area for up to 15 minutes every few hours, ensuring the ice is **never** in direct contact with the skin.

Rest and elevation

Try to rest the foot for the first 24-72 hours to allow the early stage of healing to begin. Lie down and raise your ankle above the level of your hips to reduce swelling. You can use pillows or a stool to keep your foot up when sitting.

Early movement and exercise

Early movement of the ankle and foot is important to promote circulation and reduce the risk of developing a DVT (blood clot). Follow the exercises in this leaflet but, if they cause too much pain, stop them for a short time before trying again. This will ensure your ankle and foot do not become too stiff. These exercises will help the healing process.

Early weight bearing (putting weight through your injured foot) helps increase the speed of healing. Try to walk as normally as possible as this will help with your recovery.

Rehabilitation plan

0-2 weeks since injury

If supplied, wear the boot for comfort when walking. It is fine to remove the boot to wash and air the foot when not walking. You do not need to wear the boot at night but may do so for comfort if you prefer. Begin the '**Initial exercises**' shown on the next page, and start to wean yourself off the crutches, as able.

2-6 weeks since injury

Try to wean yourself out of the boot and walk without crutches if you can do so without limping. Try walking around the house at first. You will need to wear the boot if you go on a long walk. Start the exercises on the next page, '**Exercises from two weeks onwards**'.

6-12 weeks since injury

The sprain is healed and you can begin to resume normal activity but be guided by any pain and swelling you experience. You should be able to carry out day-to-day activities, although difficult tasks, long walks etc., may still cause some discomfort and swelling. Begin the '**Advanced exercises for sports rehabilitation**'.

Initial ankle and foot range of movement exercises

Repeat these exercises 10 times each, 3-4 times a day.



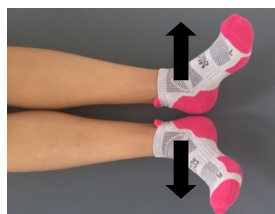
1) Point your foot up and down within a comfortable range of movement.



2) Make circles with your foot in one direction and then change direction.



3) With your heels together, move your toes apart, as shown in the picture.



Exercises from two weeks onwards



Ankle stretch

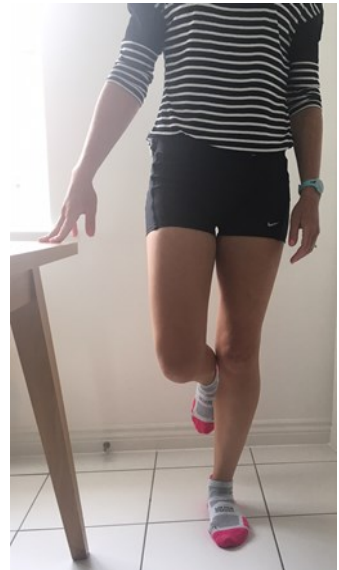
Sit with your leg straight out in front of you. Put a towel/bandage around your foot and pull it towards you. Feel a stretch in the back of your calf. Hold this for up to 30 seconds and repeat three times.

Redeveloping your balance

Level 1: Stand holding onto a chair or firm surface. Practice standing on your previously injured ankle for up to 30 seconds. Once you have achieved this, move to level 2.

Level 2: Whilst standing on one leg, attempt to release your grip on the chair/surface and hold for up to 30 seconds. Once you have achieved this, move to level 3.

Level 3: Once standing freely on one leg without support you can attempt to close your eyes for up to 30 seconds.



Advanced exercises for sports rehabilitation

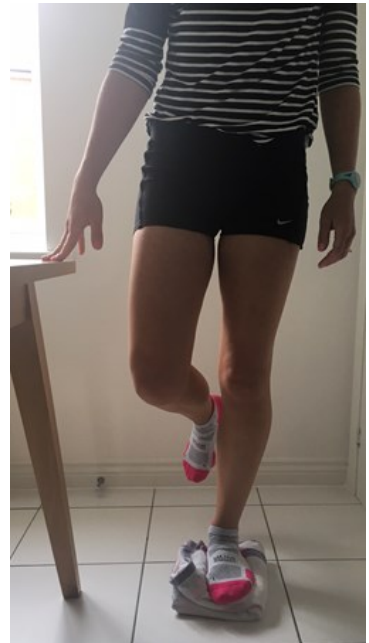
Once you can easily complete the balance exercises on the previous page, below are some examples of what you can move onto next.

Developing dynamic ankle control required for sports:

Level 1: Walk on the spot on a soft surface, e.g. place a cushion under a mat. Look straight ahead while staying upright.

Level 2: Attempt to stand on one leg on the uneven surface holding it for up to 30 seconds using your good leg first.

Level 3: Attempt the level 2 exercise again but by also closing your eyes. Again, try using your good leg first to see how hard it is.



Worries or concerns

If you have any worries or concerns following discharge from hospital, please contact the virtual fracture clinic Monday to Friday, 12 noon to 4pm.

Outside of these hours, you can leave a message on the answerphone. We will respond to all clear messages left.

Virtual Fracture Clinic ☎ **0778 817 8689**

Alternatively, outside of these hours, please contact NHS 111 or your GP.

Contact Telephone Numbers:

NHS 111

☎ 111

Virtual Fracture Clinic

☎ 0778 817 8689

Urgent Treatment Centre, New QEII
Welwyn Garden City

☎ 01707 247549

Further Information

More information can be found on NHS Choices website: www.nhs.uk

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