

Ankle Sprains



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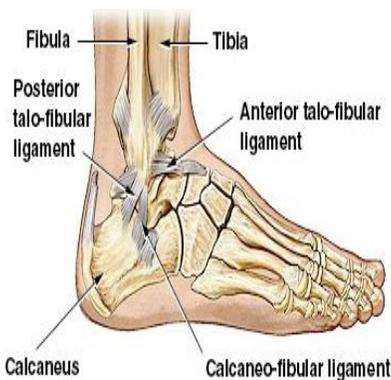
Ankle Anatomy

The ankle joint is made up of 3 bones, the tibia, fibula and talus, as well as a multiple ligaments. The fibula is located on the outside of the lower leg and the tibia is also known as the shin bone. The fibula and tibia come together forming a notch as the bottom, where the talus sits. The ligaments connect the bones to each other and allow for stabilization while moving in specific directions.



What is an ankle sprain?

An ankle sprain occurs when the ligaments of the ankle joint are stretched or torn.



What causes an ankle sprain?

Most ankle sprains occur when the ligaments on the outside of the ankle are stretched/torn. This occurs when the foot rolls inward, which can be caused by uneven ground or stepping on another player's foot. A 'high' ankle sprain is another type of sprain, but is less common. This type of injury occurs when the ligament between the tibia and fibula are stretched, which can be caused by the toe dragging on the field. The severity of any sprain can range from a minor stretch to a partial or complete tear of the ligaments. In some cases, a sprain can be associated with a fracture of the surrounding bone.

What do I do if I have an ankle sprain?

If you sprain your ankle, the most important part of recovery is to make sure the pain goes away. R.I.C.E (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation) is a great way to help alleviate the pain.

Rest your body, which means no athletic activity

Ice your ankle, for 20 minutes every 1—2 hours

Compress your ankle using an ACE wrap, start near your toes and wrap up to your calf

Elevate your ankle as much as possible (in class, watching TV, eating dinner)

Most ankle sprains tend to be uncomplicated and will heal with basic medical care and rehabilitation, but it is important to get evaluated by a medical healthcare professional (athletic trainer, physician, physical therapist...). If you are **UNABLE** to bear weight on the foot after injury, are in severe pain, have weakness and/or numbness, make sure you are seen **URGENTLY**.

Once the pain has subsided, begin these light rehabilitation exercises at home:

- **ABC's:** Moving only your ankle and foot, "write" each letter of the alphabet from A to Z. Do not move your shin. Write the letters as large as possible. Repeat for a total of 3 alphabets. Do at least 4x a day.



- **Weight shifts:** If weight bearing can be tolerated, stand upright with equal pressure on both legs. Slowly shift your weight to the side of your injured ankle then return to the center position. Repeat exercise 15 to 20 times.
- **Single leg balance:** Stand on one leg, with a slight bend in the knee, engage your core and glutes, make sure your hips are parallel to the ground
- **Calf stretch:** Stand on a stair/bleacher/bench, hang your heel of the back until you feel a stretch in the back of your lower leg. Keep your knee straight and hold 15 – 20 seconds. Bend your knee and repeat. Switch sides and repeat.
- **Mini Squats:** If weight bearing can be tolerated, stand upright with equal pressure in both legs. Make sure your feet are hip width apart. Slightly bend your knees 20– 30 degrees. Make sure your knees stay in line with your ankles and behind your toes. Stand back upright. Repeat exercise 15—20 times.
- **Resisted range of motion (ROM):**
 - *Eversion* (turning the ankle outward): Sit a bench or table with the leg extended straight and your foot/ankle off the end of the bench. Place your ankle in a 90 degree position, have a friend or parent take one hand and cup the your heel, place the other hand on the upper outside of the foot just below the toes. Apply pressure against this hand (turning the ankle outwards). Make sure not to rotate at the hip and that your ankle is maintaining a semi 90 degree angle throughout the full range of motion. When the athlete has reached the full range of motion; return to the start and repeat for about 10 –12 reps.
 - *Inversion* (turning the ankle inward), When doing ankle inversion; just switch the hand positions. Take the hand that was place on the heel and place it on the inside of the foot just below the toes, and the hand that was on the outside of the foot will now cup the heel. Repeat the same exact process by applying resistance against the inside of the foot.
 - *Dorsi-flexion* (pulling the foot back towards the shins). Have both feet extended off the end of the bench. Place each hand on the top of each foot just below the toes. Pull your feet back towards the shins. When at the full range of motion, go back to the start and repeat 10—12 reps.



If you do sprain your ankle, make sure you talk to your coach. If you need to see a physician, call 206 598 3294, option 8 to set up an appointment with the UW Sports Medicine Center at Husky Stadium. Mention that you are a Seattle United athlete and they will get you in within 48 hours.