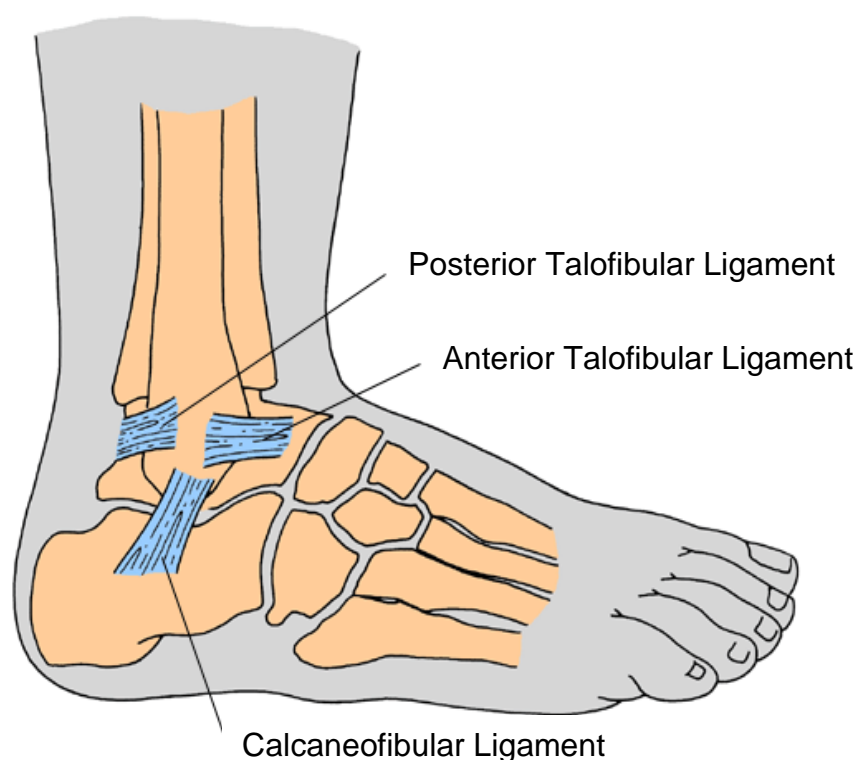


## Patient information

### **Sprained Ankle**

Therapies Department



Your ankle is supported by strong ligaments, which help control movement. When a ligament is injured it usually results in pain, swelling and sometimes bruising. It may be difficult to stand with your full weight on your injured leg.

Most of these injuries heal well naturally within six to twelve weeks. Occasionally these injuries can take longer to settle and may need further treatment.

## You can help to speed up your recovery by following some simple advice

- **Rest**

Reduce your normal activities. Do walk short distances but stand as little as possible for a few days. Avoid sporting activities. If you have an active job you may need to take some time off work in the early stages.

- **Ice**

A bag of frozen peas wrapped in a wet towel and placed on the painful side of your ankle for 10 to 15 minutes every few hours can help reduce the pain and swelling. (Please note: If you have poor feeling in your foot seek advice from your therapist or doctor first - Ice can burn)

- **Compress Elasticated** tubular bandaging (e.g. Tubigrip) can be worn during the daytime only to help control swelling in the first few weeks after injury. When applying bandaging follow the manufacturers size guide and cover the foot and lower leg stopping just below the bend in the knee. Alternatively, some people will be fitted with splints that provide both support and compression.

- **Elevate**

Raise your foot on a pillow at night (at a higher level than your heart) and for short periods during the day so that gravity can help control the swelling and pain

- **Painkillers**

Most people need simple painkillers such as paracetamol for the first few days. It is important to return to normal activities as soon as possible and it is sometimes necessary to take painkillers to do allow you to do this. Your doctor or a pharmacist can advise you which painkillers you can take.

- **Exercise**

It is important to keep the rest of your leg and foot moving normally. Normal stresses and strains help the ligament to heal. Try to regain joint movement, muscle power, a normal walking pattern and balance reactions as soon as possible to ensure a good recovery.

### What should I do in the first few days?

Point your foot and ankle up then down. Repeat this five to ten times each hour with your foot higher than your heart. Stretch to the start of pain.



Turn your foot in and out. Repeat this five to ten times each hour with your foot higher than your heart.

Stretch to the start of pain.



It is normal to feel some discomfort when you are moving an injured ankle. This should last for a few minutes after each exercise session.

### **After four to seven days**

Increase the movement in your ankle by helping these movements with your hand or a scarf. It is a good guide to stretch into pain but it should not make it feel worse for more than 20 minutes after exercise. If it does make it feel worse do not stop doing the exercises but do them less often or less of each movement.

### **Should I walk on my ankle?**

You should try to put some weight on your foot as soon as possible. You need normal stresses and strains to help your ligaments heal rapidly and fully. **You will feel some pain on walking.** It is important to have some periods of rest in the early recovery stage. You should reduce walking if you are feeling more and more pain.

### **As soon as you are able**

Start to stretch your calf muscles with your knee bent and with your knee straight for ten seconds at a time five to ten times every two hours



Stand on one leg (your affected leg) for a few seconds at a time, increase the time gradually at first with your eyes open, then with them closed. You can check how you are doing by comparing with your uninjured leg.

### **When do I stop doing my exercises?**

You should keep doing your exercises every two to three hours until your movement and balance has returned to normal and then once or twice a day for a further 6 to 12 weeks. Scar tissue tightens naturally and most of the tightening happens in the first three months after an injury.

### **When can I return to work?**

This depends on what your job is. Most people return to work after a few days. If your job is strenuous you may need a little longer recovery time

### **When can I return to sport?**

This depends on what sport and to what level. As a general rule you should have normal movement, muscle power and balance first.

### **Will I need other treatment?**

If you have torn a portion of your ligament and or are struggling with your rehabilitation you may benefit from physiotherapy. If the same injury has happened to you on more than two other occasions in the last 12 months you may wish to seek physiotherapy treatment.

### **What do I do if I am not improving?**

Please remember that nature takes time to heal these injuries and it is likely that you will take **at least six weeks** to return to normal activities. You should, however, be seeing some sign of your pain settling within a week

**If you are worried that you are not improving** make an appointment to see your family doctor (G.P.) **or** return to the Emergency Department Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm.

### **Feedback**

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

### **Further information**

**Royal and Broadgreen Hospitals**

**Tel: 0151 706 2760**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2760**

**Aintree Hospital**  
**Tel: 0151 529 8047**  
**Text phone number: 18001 0151 529 8047**

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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