

ANKLE SPRAINS

THE INJURY

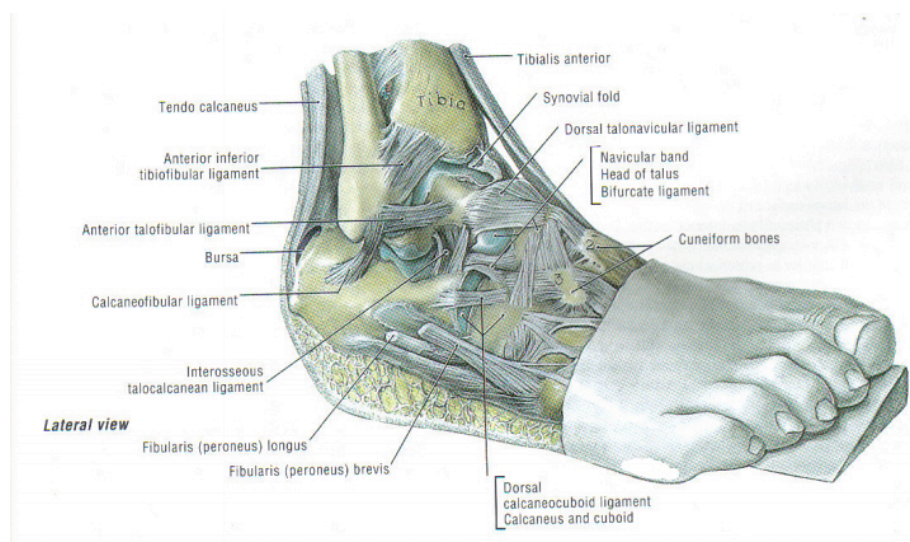
'Sprains' of the ankle occur frequently in both sporting and non-sporting environments. The majority of ankle sprains result in ligament damage which causes acute swelling and pain with movement and weight bearing.

Ligament damage can range from minor to major damage:

- Grade 1 – mild sprain with no instability
- Grade 2 – incomplete tear with mild instability
- Grade 3 – ligament rupture with severe instability

Other injuries may accompany a sprained ankle such as a bone fracture and damage to surrounding muscles and tendons.

Future function may be limited if correct rehabilitation is not carried out.



ANATOMY OF THE ANKLE REGION

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Rehabilitation begins at home....

- Apply an ice pack to the region as soon as possible for a period of 15 minutes. Repeat this process every 2 hours when possible and continue for 48 hours post injury
- Avoid hot baths, heat rubs, massage, alcohol and excessive weight bearing as this will increase circulation and cause further swelling
- Apply a light compression bandage (figure of 8) to the ankle in between ice applications and elevate the foot on a chair where possible. This will help to reduce swelling.
- After 24 hours attempt to gently move the ankle up, down, in and outwards every 2 hours
- If severe swelling and pain occurs following injury, it is recommended that you get an XRAY of the ankle to rule out fracture

WHAT PHYSIOTHERAPY WILL DO

- A comprehensive examination of the area will determine which structures are damaged and the extent of the injury
- Initial treatment will consist of manual therapy and electrotherapy modalities. This will accelerate the healing process, prevent scar tissue, reduce pain and swelling and restore normal joint mechanics
- You will begin a personal rehabilitation program that will strengthen as well as improve balance and joint position sense (proprioception) of the ankle. This is vital in helping to prevent chronic problems such as instability and recurrent ankle sprains.