



ANKLE PAIN GUIDE



Ankle pain is extremely common. In fact, thousands of Americans deal with the difficulties and inconvenience of ankle pain every day. Though it's one of the most common orthopedic injuries, many cases of ankle pain are easily treated at home; however, it's important to know what symptoms may be due to something more serious, and therefore, require professional medical attention.

Common Causes

Ankle sprains are perhaps the most common cause of ankle pain. The anatomy of an ankle sprain is pretty simple. In addition to muscles, the ankle is supported and stabilized by stretchy ligaments. As you pivot, twist, spin, and turn your way through your day, the ankle ligaments stretch to allow for the movement and then return to their normal length. A sprain happens when a ligament is forced to stretch too far, resulting in a partial or complete tear of the ligament fibers. It sounds bad, but fortunately tearing a ligament in your ankle is not like tearing one in your knee (which almost always requires surgery). With the proper treatment and rehabilitation, ankle ligaments can usually heal without surgery.

Arthritis may be another possible cause of ankle pain. According to the CDC, arthritis accounts for 18% or nearly 9 million reports of disability, making it the number one cause of adult disability. But not all arthritis cases are the same. Arthritis may be the primary cause of a person's symptoms or may appear secondary to another condition, such as gout, lupus, sarcoidosis, Lyme disease, or many others.

Although arthritis can affect any joint in the body, hands are one of the most commonly

General Anatomy

The ankle (also called the talocrural joint) is where the lower leg bones (the tibia and fibula) meet with the first bone in the foot (the talus bone). This area is stabilized by the deltoid ligament and three lateral ligaments and is controlled by a network of muscles and nerves.

afflicted sites. Arthritis can take different forms, such as osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, and even juvenile idiopathic arthritis. Each form has its own nuances and requires its own expert treatment.

Broken bones occasionally happen, and they are some of the most dramatic trauma injuries. Whether from a fall, car accident, or sports injury, broken ankles are accompanied by sudden pain, inability to bear weight on the ankle, swelling, and in the case of a compound fracture, bone puncturing through the skin. All broken bones should be treated immediately by a doctor.

Treatment

To treat mild ankle pain, use the **R.I.C.E. method**:

- REST the ankle from all weight bearing activities
- Put ICE on the injury for 20 minutes at a time, several times a day
- Gently COMPRESS the injury with a wrap or bandage to deter further swelling
- ELEVATE the ankle above the heart to encourage dispersal of any blood that's pooled in the foot.

The Next Step

Ankle pain can be a debilitating injury for many people. Physical therapy can help to put you on the path to freedom from pain by helping you to increase your strength, regain your mobility, and return you to your pre-injury activity level.

You don't have to live with ankle pain. At Idaho Physical Therapy, our caring, professional, experienced therapists can help you achieve the fastest, most complete recovery possible. Call us today to book your free assessment - **(208) 463-0022!**

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Get moving, but not too soon! When recovering from ankle pain, return to your activities gradually. Do a little each day, and as you feel stronger, do a little more and a little more until you are up to 100%. This process may take 4-6 weeks for even mild sprains. Listen to your ankle – getting it back into shape is going to hurt, but if the activity is overly painful, decrease the intensity. Conversely, you must challenge your ankle to get it back into shape. An ankle that doesn't move will never regain the strength and flexibility it needs to function.

Ankle pain that worsens or is due to a more serious condition should be diagnosed and treated by a medical professional.

