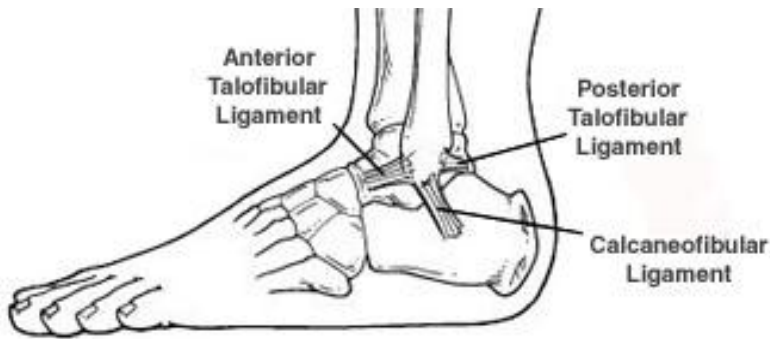


# NORTH SCOTTSDALE PODIATRY GROUP

## FOOT FACTS: ANKLE SPRAIN

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### Causes

Sprained ankles often result from a fall, a sudden twist, or a blow that forces the ankle joint out of its normal position. Ankle sprains commonly occur while participating in sports, wearing inappropriate shoes, or walking or running on an uneven surface. Sometimes ankle sprains occur because a person is born with weak ankles. Previous ankle or foot injuries can also weaken the ankle and lead to sprains.

### The Severity of the Ankle Sprain

The severity of an ankle sprain depends on whether the ligament is stretched, partially torn, or completely torn, as well as on the number of ligaments involved. Ankle sprains are not the same as strains, which affect muscles rather than ligaments.

**First degree symptoms** – a first degree ankle sprain is when the ligaments have been stretched but not torn. This injury is the most common and if not neglected the most minor. Symptoms include: Mild pain, Some swelling, Some joint instability, Mild joint stiffness, & Difficulty jogging or jumping.

**Second degree symptoms** – a second degree ankle sprain is a partial tearing of the ligament. This may require 3-6 weeks of rest before you can return to full activity. Symptoms include: Significant swelling, Bruising, Moderate pain, Some loss of motion or use of the ankle, & Trouble walking.

**Third degree symptoms** – a third degree ankle sprain is the most severe of ankle injuries, but rarely requires surgery. With this sprain, the ligament has been torn completely. This usually requires 8-12 months for ligaments to fully heal. Symptoms include: Severe swelling, Severe pain, Instability of the joint, Extreme loss of motion, Walking can be quite painful.

### What Is an Ankle Sprain?

An ankle sprain is an injury to one or more ligaments in the ankle, usually on the outside of the ankle. Ligaments are bands of tissue, like rubber bands, that connect one bone to another and bind the joints together. In the ankle joint, ligaments provide stability by limiting side-to-side movement.

### Treatment

When you have an ankle sprain, rehabilitation is crucial and it starts the moment your treatment begins. Your foot and ankle surgeon may recommend one or more of the following treatment options:

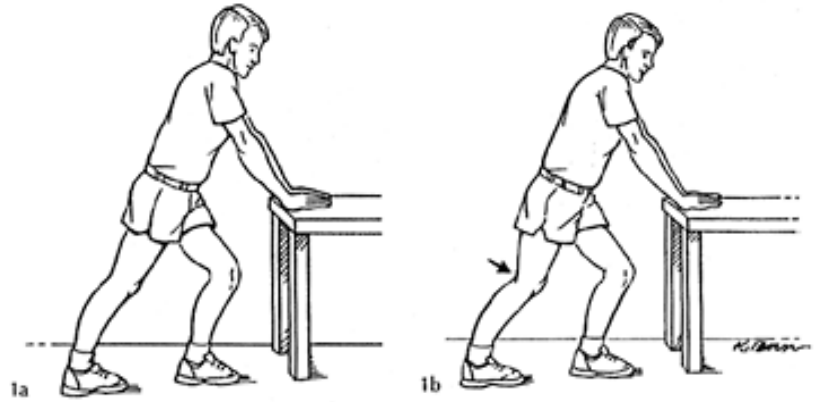
- **Rest.** Stay off the injured ankle. Walking may cause further injury.
- **Ice.** Apply an ice pack to the injured area, placing a thin towel between the ice and the skin. Use ice for 20 minutes and then wait at least 40 minutes before icing again.
- **Compression.** An elastic wrap may be recommended to control swelling.
- **Elevation.** The ankle should be raised slightly above the level of your heart to reduce swelling.
- **Early physical therapy.** Your doctor will start you on a rehabilitation program as soon as possible to promote healing and increase your range of motion. This includes doing prescribed exercises.
- **Medications.** Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen, may be recommended to reduce pain and inflammation. In some cases, prescription pain medications are needed to provide adequate relief.
- **Shoes.** Athletic shoes that fit well will stabilize your foot and minimize slippage. They should have strong, flat, even soles that are neither too spongy nor too thick.

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### Stretches

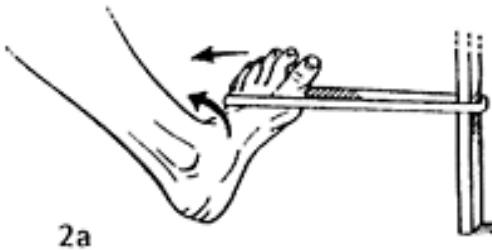
Always stretch before and after you exercise. First, face a table or a wall and lean against it, with your back leg straight and your front leg bent. Lean forward with your back heel on the floor until you feel a stretch in the calf of your back leg. Hold that position for 15 to 30 seconds (Picture 1a). Then slightly bend your back leg while keeping both heels on the floor. Hold this stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. (Picture 1b). Make sure you stretch both legs once before and after exercising.



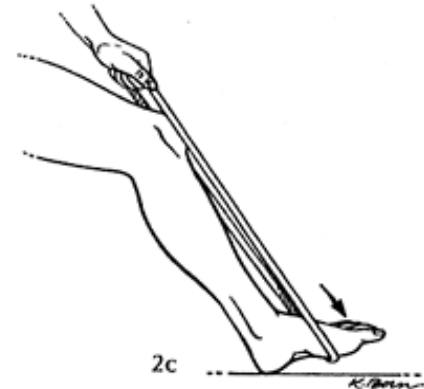
### Exercises

Take the rubber resistance band given to you by your doctor and tie it into a large loop. Sit on a chair. Keep your heel on the floor and do the exercises with your foot and ankle, not your whole leg. Place one end of the loop around the leg of a heavy chair or table and loop the other end of the band over your foot.

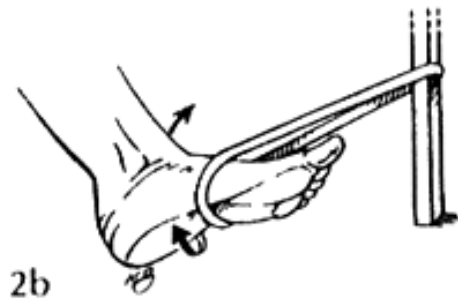
First move your ankle out and up (Picture 2a), keeping the band tight.



Remove the band from the table leg and hold it in your hands. Keeping one end of the band looped around your foot, press your foot down toward the floor against the resistance of the rubber band (Picture 2c). Try to keep your heel on the floor, just like pressing on the accelerator pedal of a car.



Then move the ankle in and up (Picture 2b).



Heel raises can be done by standing on one foot, using a chair for balance (Picture 2d). Slowly raise your heel off the ground, then slowly lower your heel to the floor.



Next, while keeping your heel on the floor, work the ankle straight up towards you (Picture 3a).

