

# Ankle sprains

## What can I do?

**Positively Podiatry**

*Protecting Limbs Prolonging Lives*

**NHS**  
Greater Glasgow  
and Clyde



### Help your body to recover

To help the soft tissues please see our sprains and strains section [LINK](#)

### Ease your pain

If required use simple painkillers to settle pain and discuss with your **pharmacist** or GP if you feel these are not effective.

### Keep moving

Gently increase the movement and strength will help. In the early stages try your ankle exercises little and often e.g. 5 mins x 5 times a day.

For more advice about how much exercise to do please see [link](#).

Exercises are included in this information.

### Adapt what you do

Taking a common sense approach, reduce activities that make you feel worse without resting completely.

Walking aids may also help in some instances but not in all. This will be considered as part of any healthcare assessment you may have..

## Answers to your questions

### ? What is causing my pain?

If you have had an injury to your ankle there is likely to be some inflammation around the area. Inflammation is produced by your body to help heal the soft tissue. The symptoms of this process included mild heat and redness, swelling and sensitive skin around the area. Bruising may also appear and often doesn't appear til a few days later.

### ? Will it go away?

Most ankle sprains get better within a few days/ weeks. With most people returning to all their normal activities including sport within 6-8 weeks.

### ? How can I help myself?

As things start to settle getting your normal ankle movement back, improved balance and making it stronger will help and also help reduce it happening again. See exercises below.

### ? Where can I get help if things not improving?

Most people do not need to seek any medical attention but if you feel despite following all the advice things are not improving please seek the advice of a health professional e.g. Physiotherapist, podiatrist.

# Specific exercises

Beginner exercises try these little and often e.g. 5 mins x 5 times a day

## Mobility exercise 1

In sitting gently slide your foot forwards and backwards. Making the movement bigger as pain and swelling allows. [▶ Video](#)



Using something round e.g. water bottle/ rolling pin, roll your foot and ankle from side to side.

[▶ Video](#)



## Mobility exercise 2

In sitting with your heel supported on the ground start doing a figure of eight with your foot or write the alphabet. As things get easier lift your foot off and perform the same movements. [▶ Video](#)



## Strengthening exercise 1

In sitting place your uninjured foot on the outside of the sore ankle and gently press into it creating tension in the area without movement. Do the same on the inside of the foot.

[▶ Video](#)



## Strengthening exercise 2

In sitting lift your heels off the ground causing a tightening in your calf muscle. [▶ Video](#)



## Balance exercise

In standing with a support beside you gently try and balance on one leg making sure you are not going to fall over. As you become more confident try it without the support. [▶ Video](#)



This is for the early stages when you are starting to get things moving.

**Intermediate exercises** can be done less often but for longer e.g.  
**10 mins x 2 or 3 times a day**

### Mobility 3

Use a support if needed. Try and bring one foot in front of the other (heel to toe) as if you are walking along a line.

The second part is to try moving from side to side by bringing one foot beside each other from back to front and also from front to back. [▶ Video](#)



### Mobility 4

standing with one leg behind the other stand up tall and lean forward causing a stretch at the back of your calf.

Then bring the back leg in a little, keeping the heel on the ground bend your knee feeling the stretch in the back of your calf/heel. [▶ Video](#)



Now things should be starting to feel better with reduced swelling, pain and a normal walking pattern

### Strengthening 3

Standing and using a support. Keep your knees straight and lift heels off the ground. Also try this with your knees slightly bent. [▶ Video](#)



### Balance 2

At this stage try and balance on one foot, use a support if necessary. Try this also with your eyes shut to make it harder. [▶ Video](#)



More advanced exercises can be performed daily or a few times a week for 10-30 minutes.

### Mobility 5

have support if required. Using a small step/bottom stair place injured foot onto the step and lunge forward. Also try coming down off the step. [Video](#)



### Strengthening 4

Using a support for balance try this exercise on one foot only. Lifting the heel off with the knee straight then try it with the knee bent. To make this more challenging try it off the back of a step. [Video](#)

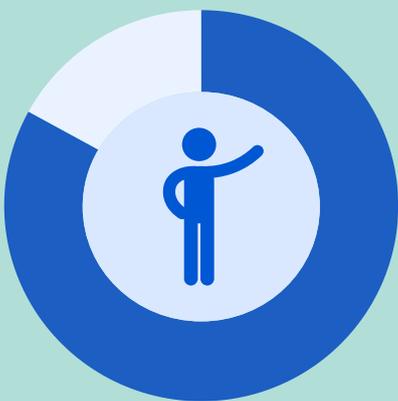


### Balance 3

Using a soft surface e.g. cushion try and balance on one leg. [Video](#)



At this stage you should have more confidence in your ankle and back to most activities.



## FURTHER RESOURCES

[Hints on how to use crutches](#)

[Advice about managing a soft tissue injury](#)

[Return to play after a lateral ligament Ankle Sprain](#)

[Tips on returning to sport](#)