

## Managing Ankle Sprains

### What is an ankle sprain?

An ankle sprain is when the ligaments of the ankle (commonly on the outside of the ankle) sustain some tearing. The most common way this happens in sport is when you land after catching the ball and you land in an awkward way or on someone's foot. Sometimes just from changing direction quickly and having some instability through the ankle can lead to a sprained ankle.

### What to do once your ankle is sprained

Early management is RICE. **Rest, Ice, Compress, and Elevate.**

When it says **rest**, it should NOT be complete rest. Rest from painful activities but still try to walk around if possible. If you can't put weight on to the injured ankle, you should be using axillary (armpit) crutches for a couple of days. Start doing gentle range of motion exercises so the ankle doesn't stiffen up too much. Point toes up and down 20x; roll them around in a circle 20x in both directions.

**Ice** should be applied for 20 minutes every 2-3 hours. This will help to reduce the swelling and pain. Use a towel between the ice and skin.

**Compress** with tubigrip or a bandage. This will help to control the swelling and reduce pain. If using a bandage, start at the toes and work its way up half of the calf.

**Elevate** the ankle above the level of the heart so that the fluid can come back to the heart and the rest of the body. This will also help reduce the swelling.

### What now?

Start walking as soon as you can tolerate it. Try to walk without a limp if possible. The sooner you can start to do this, the sooner your rehabilitation can begin.

When you are able to tolerate it, start stretching the ankle and calf. You can do this by standing and facing a wall, place your hands on the wall and the injured ankle behind you. Push your body weight into the back foot. You will either feel a stretch in the calf or tightness in the ankle. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat. Do this every day.

Then it is time to start rehabilitation that focuses on strengthening and preventing the injury from happening again. **See Rehabilitation and Prevention of Ankle Sprains.**

It is always best to have treatment and rehabilitation guided by a physiotherapist. Physios can help to speed up the healing process and guide you on when to do the right exercises. **Call Back In Motion Aspendale Gardens on 9580 1985.**

