

Ankle Fracture

Full Weight Bearing - 6 Weeks

This leaflet can be made available
in alternative languages / formats on request.

*如有需要，本传单可提供其他语言/版式
此單張的其他語言/格式版本可按要求提供*

Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona
w innych językach/formatach.

Author: Senior Physiotherapist
Department: Therapy
Document Number: STHK1308
Version: 1
Review date: 01/02/2023

Information for Patients

This is a follow-up leaflet to your recent telephone consultation with the fracture care team explaining the ongoing management of your injury. Your case has been reviewed by an Orthopaedic Consultant (Bone Specialist) and a Physiotherapist.

You have sustained a fracture to your ankle.

This normally takes six weeks to heal but you may still have pain and swelling for up to six months after your injury.

During this period, it is important that you follow the rehabilitation plan on the following pages. Following your rehabilitation plan will help to prevent further injury and help to improve your function. Completing the exercises is important to prevent your ankle from becoming stiff. It is advisable to take your pain killers as prescribed to enable you to complete your exercises. You will find that the swelling is often worse at the end of the day, elevating your ankle will help with this. You may walk on the foot as comfort allows, but you will find it easier to walk with crutches in the early stages.

You can return to driving once your boot has been removed and you feel confident in safely controlling your vehicle.

If you are worried that you are unable to follow this rehabilitation plan, are experiencing pain or symptoms other than at the site of the original injury or surrounding area, or have any questions, then please contact us for advice using the contact details on the back of this booklet.

Smoking cessation

Medical evidence suggests that smoking prolongs fracture healing time. In extreme cases it can stop healing altogether. It is important that you consider this information with relation to your recent injury. Stopping smoking during the healing phase of your fracture will help ensure optimal recovery from this injury.

For advice on smoking cessation and local support available, please refer to the following website: <http://smokefree.nhs.uk> or discuss this with your GP.

Management / Rehabilitation Plan

Weeks since injury	Rehabilitation Plan
0-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wear the boot (if provided) all of the time when walking. You do not need to wear it in bed or when resting at home.• Use the crutches (if provided) to take some of the weight off your foot, as required.• Start Stage 1 Exercises & Advice.
6-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gradually discontinue using the boot and elbow crutches. Try walking around the house without them first.• Wear the boot when walking longer distances outdoors.• Move on to Stage 2 Exercises.
8-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fracture should be largely united (healed).• Gradually resume normal activities as pain allows.• Heavier or more strenuous tasks, including long walks, may still be difficult and cause discomfort and swelling at this stage.• Begin Stage 3 Exercises if required.
12+	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Symptoms will continue to improve over the next few months.• If you are still experiencing significant pain and / or stiffness, please contact us for further advice / management.

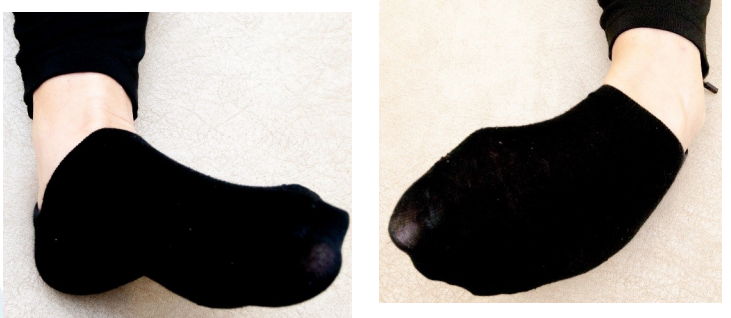
Exercises

Ankle & Foot Range of Movement Exercise

1. Point your injured foot up and down within a comfortable range of movement. Repeat 10 times.



2. Alternately turn your foot outwards leading with the outer border of your foot (little toe) and then turn your foot inwards leading with the inner border of your foot (big toe), as shown in the picture. Make sure you keep the rest of your leg still. Repeat 10 times.



3. Make circles with your foot in one direction, then repeat in the other direction. Repeat 10 times.

Advice

Cold packs:

A cold pack (ice pack or frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel) can provide short-term pain relief. Apply this to the sore area for up to 15 minutes every few hours, ensuring the ice is never in direct contact with the skin.

Rest and elevation:

Try to rest the foot for the first 24-72 hours after your injury to allow the early stage of healing to begin. Raise your ankle above the level of your hips to reduce swelling. You can use pillows or a stool to keep your foot up.

Early movement and exercise:

Early movement of the ankle and foot is important to promote circulation and reduce the risk of developing a DVT (blood clot). Early weight bearing (putting weight through your injured foot) helps increase the speed of healing. Try to walk as normally as possible as this will help with your recovery.

Exercises

Stage 2 Exercises (3-4 times a day)

Ankle Stretches

1. Sit with your injured leg straight out in front of you. Place a towel or dressing gown cord around your foot and pull it towards you until you feel a stretch in the back of your calf. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.
2. Sit on a chair. Cross your injured ankle over your other knee. Place your hand over the top of your ankle and stretch the top of your foot and ankle, pointing your toes downwards. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.

OR

Place your foot on a chair behind you, as shown in the picture. Hold onto something for balance. Point your foot and ankle downwards. You should feel a stretch at the front of your foot & ankle. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.



Balance Exercises

Level 1: (for those who **could not** balance on 1 leg prior to this injury)

- a) Stand with your feet as close together as possible. Hold onto something for balance. Hold this position for 30 seconds. If you can do this, move on to exercise Level 1b)
- b) As above but do not hold onto anything for balance. Hold this for position for 30 seconds. If you can do this, move on to exercise Level 1c)
- c) Put one foot in front of the other as close as you feel comfortable with. Hold onto something for balance. Hold this position for 30 seconds. Repeat with the other foot in front. If you can do this comfortably & safely, try this without holding onto anything.



Exercises

Stage 2 Exercises Continued (3-4 times a day)

Balance Exercises

Level 2: (for those who **could** balance on 1 leg prior to this injury)

- a) Holding on to a firm surface for balance, aim to stand on just your injured leg, making sure it doesn't increase your pain. Hold this position for 30 seconds. Once you can achieve this pain-free, move on to exercise Level 2b).
- b) As above but without holding on to anything for balance. Hold this position for 30 seconds. If you can do this, move onto exercise Level 2c).
- c) Progress to attempting the above exercise with your eyes closed. Always stand in a safe environment with a firm surface nearby should you require it. Hold this position for 10 seconds.



Heel Raises

Stand. Hold on to a stable object for support.

Push up onto your toes, lifting your heels.

Repeat 10 times.

Exercises

Stage 3 Exercises (3-4 times a day)

These are optional advanced exercises designed for sports rehabilitation.

Level 1:

- a) Stand on your injured leg on an uneven surface (such as a pillow or a wobble board / cushion). Aim to hold this position for 30 seconds. Once you can achieve this pain-free, move onto exercise Level 1b).

- b) Progress to attempting the above exercise with your eyes closed. Always stand in a safe environment with a firm surface nearby should you require it. Aim to balance for 10 seconds.



Level 2:

- a) Stand on your injured leg, with your hands together. Swing your arms in a figure of 8 in both directions for 30 seconds.

- b) As above, but with your eyes closed. Aim to balance for 10 seconds.



Contact Information

Fracture Clinic: 0151 430 4905 (9am-5pm Mon-Fri)

Emergency Department: 0151 430 2399

Whiston Hospital
Warrington Road,
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR
Telephone: 0151 426 1600

 /sthknhs  @sthk.nhs

www.sthk.nhs.uk