

Ankle pain and/or injuries are very common. The ankle joint is a weight-bearing joint making it vulnerable to injury and sprains.



Common Causes

Ankle sprains are one of the most common sports injuries. Ligaments connect bone to bone. An ankle sprain occurs when these ligaments are overstretched, resulting in a partial or complete tear of the ligament fibers. There are three grades for a sprained ankle: Grade 1– micro trauma to a ligament, Grade 2- partial tear of a ligament, and Grade 3- complete or full tear of a ligament. Ankle sprains can easily occur while running or playing on uneven surfaces, wearing inadequate shoes, and playing sports that require sudden changes in direction such as basketball, football, and soccer.

Achilles Tendonitis: The large tendon on the back of the heel is known as the Achilles tendon. Achilles tendonitis is caused by performing activities which overuse this tendon such as running, gymnastics, dance etc., leading to swelling and pain.

Arthritis: The ankle joint can also be affected by osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis resulting in significant discomfort.

ANKLE PAIN GUIDE

Fractures: Stress fractures are tiny cracks in the bone that can be caused by overuse. Weight-bearing bones in the ankle are the most affected with stress fractures. Although athletes such as runners are particularly susceptible to stress fractures, anyone can suffer from them.

Foot fractures are usually associated with traumatic injuries. This can occur from a fall, sports injury, or motor vehicle accident. Broken bones in the ankle are accompanied by sudden pain, swelling and the inability to put full weight on the foot. Follow-up with a doctor is recommended.

Treatment

Acute mild ankle pain should be treated with **R.I.C.E.** (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation):

- Rest the ankle from all weight bearing activities.
- Ice the ankle for 15 -20 minutes at a time.
- Compress the ankle with a wrap or bandage.
- Elevate the ankle to help reduce swelling.

If the R.I.C.E. treatment does not offer any relief, call one of our professionals at Physical Therapy of Idaho for an evaluation.

What to expect from an ankle evaluation at Physical Therapy of Idaho:

- Range of motion measurements: this is done to determine how much you can move your ankle in all directions.
- Palpation: this consists of touching various structures around the ankle to detect any abnormalities or pain.
- Gait Evaluation: assessment of how you walk.
- Girth or swelling measurement: swelling in the ankle can occur after injury. This can be monitored by your physical therapist.
- Special Tests: these tests are specific maneuvers performed on the ankle to help determine what specific structure is causing pain or problems.

Most insurance carriers do not require a doctor's referral for you to commence treatment at Physical Therapy of Idaho. We can usually get you in for your evaluation within 24 hours of calling for an appointment, so relief may be only a phone call away. Our physical therapists have between 10 and 20 years of experience in treating pain and injuries, so let us help you get you back to your best, pain free. Call us today!

