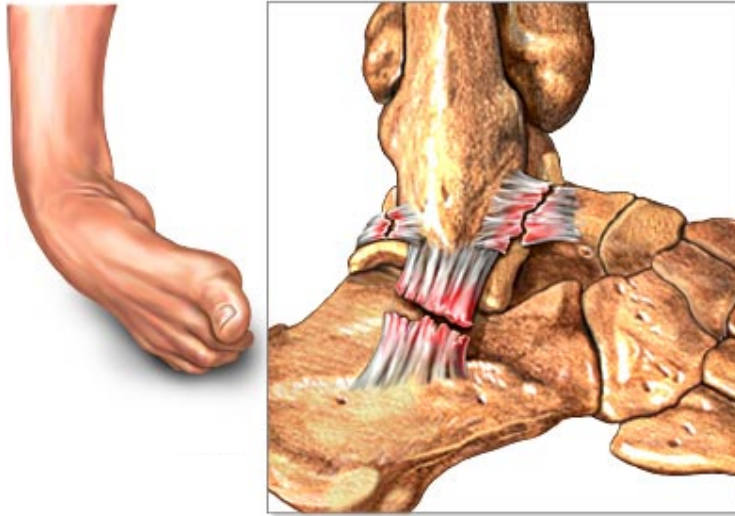


# ANKLE SPRAINS



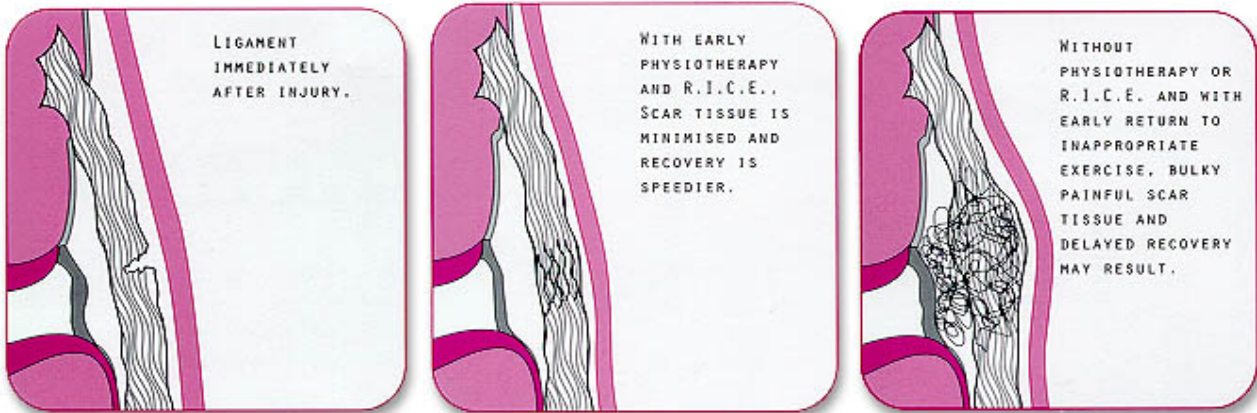
- The ankle joint is made up of four bones shaped to make the joint stable. Increased stability of the joint is provided by ligaments, which are bands of strong, fibrous tissue that guide movement and prevent the joint from moving too much.
- An ankle sprain occurs when the ligaments are over stretched causing ligament fibres and small blood vessels to tear. Pain, bleeding in the tissues and swelling are the result.

As soon as possible, and for 48 - 72 hours after injury, use the **RICE** method:

- **REST:** Take it easy and only move within your limit of pain.
- **ICE:** As soon as possible, and for 20 minutes every two hours, apply ice or a pack of frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel. This helps to control the bleeding and secondary tissue damage.
- **COMPRESSION:** Firmly bandage the entire ankle and lower shin. This helps to control swelling.
- **ELEVATION:** As much as possible, elevate your ankle higher than the level of your heart to reduce swelling.

Avoid any of the **HARM** factors in the first 48 - 72 hours to prevent increased swelling and help your recovery:

- **HEAT:** Heat will increase bleeding, swelling & pain. Avoid hot showers or baths, saunas, spas, hot water bottles, heat packs or hot ointments.
- **ALCOHOL:** alcohol increases blood flow, which will increase bleeding, pain & swelling
- **RUNNING:** exercising too early puts you at risk of worsening the injury or delaying the healing process.
- **MASSAGE:** massage increases the blood flow which will increase bleeding and swelling to the area.



- As well as adhering to RICE & no HARM, your healing will be aided by doing some gentle range of movement exercises.

## Some Suggested Exercises

(aim to do these exercises 3 - 4 times per day within your pain limit)

1. Ankle pumps - moving ankle up and down (x10 hourly)
2. Writing the letters of the alphabet with your foot
3. Drawing circles with your foot
4. Loop a towel around the ball of your foot and holding onto both ends of the towel, gently pull your foot back so that you feel a stretch up the back of your calf. Hold 3 x 20 sec. (See below)



5. *When able*, Single Leg Stance (Proprioception) Exercises – Progress: eyes open, one eye closed, both eyes closed...
- If you have private health insurance or the injury is WorkCover, please follow up on your ankle management with a private physiotherapist. (Ask for a list of the private physiotherapists in the area or you can look in the Yellow Pages.)
  - If you have a private physiotherapist you know already, please provide them with your referral letter from the Emergency Department.
  - If you have no private health insurance, it is not a WorkCover injury and you live in the Orange area, ask the ED Doctor or Physiotherapist to refer you to the Orange Health Service Outpatient Physiotherapy Department.