

Patient Information

## Trauma & Orthopaedics

# Discharge advice: Soft tissue ankle injury

**You have sustained a soft tissue injury (sprain) to your ankle.** This can take approximately six weeks to heal although pain and swelling can continue for three to six months after injury. You may walk on the foot as comfort allows although you may find it easier to walk with crutches in the early stages. The swelling is often worse at the end of the day and elevating your foot will help.

If you have been given a boot to wear it is for your comfort only and is not needed to aid healing. Follow guidance below on weaning off the use of the boot.

### Ice/ice packs

For the first 24 hours you should treat the injured part with relative rest and apply icepacks.

Wrap the ice / ice pack / bag frozen peas in a damp cloth then apply to the injured area. Repeat this every one to four hours during the first couple of days.

**Do not leave the icepack on for longer than 20 minutes at a time**

### Elevation

Try to rest the foot for the first 24-72 hours 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.



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### Painkillers

You should have been advised about painkillers. We recommend that you take these regularly for the first few days both for your comfort and to enable you to move the ankle.

### Rest

We recommend relative rest for the first 24 hours but this does not mean keeping the injured part completely still. If you don't move the injured limb it will become stiffer and more painful.

We do not routinely follow up patients with this type of injury. However, if after 6 weeks you are

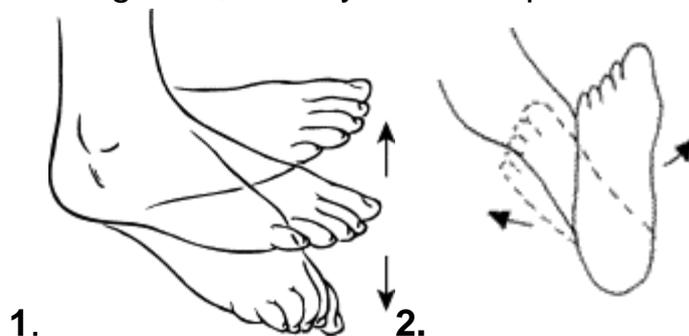
- Still experiencing significant pain and swelling or
- Struggling to wean out of the boot

Please follow the management/rehabilitation plan shown below

Weeks since injury	Rehabilitation plan
0-2	If supplied, wear the boot for walking. You can wear it at night however this is up to you. It is fine to remove the boot to wash and air the foot when not walking. Begin the 'initial exercises'. If necessary wean yourself off the crutches as able
2-6	Try to wean yourself out of the boot and walk without crutches. Try walking around the house first. Start the exercises below labelled 'Exercises from two weeks onwards'
6-12	The sprain is healed and you and you can resume normal activity but be governed by pain and swelling you are experiencing. You should be able to carry out day to day activities.

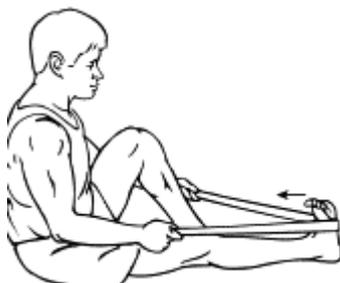
## Initial exercises to start straight away (three to four times a day)

1. Point your injured foot up and down, within comfortable range of movement.
2. Keeping heels together, move your toes apart



## Exercises from two weeks onwards

1. Sit with your injured leg straight out in front of you. Put a towel/bandage around your foot and pull it towards you. Feel a stretch in the back of your calf.



2. Balance work (for those who could stand on one leg before injury) – holding a firm surface, attempt to stand on one (your injured) leg. Hold for 30 seconds.

**Should you have any worries or concerns following discharge from hospital, please contact:**

**Virtual Fracture Clinic Hotline: 024 7696 9237**

**(Monday to Friday 9am- 4pm)**

Whilst the clinic is running, we are unable to take calls so leave a voicemail with your full name and number and you will receive a call back

For emergencies out of these hours please attend A&E.

## Patient Information

Images sourced from: Elsevier ClinicalKey

Exercise images sourced from: Safran, Marc R., MD, Instructions for Sports Medicine Patients, 392-397

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

### Document History

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