

# Prevention

The best way to prevent ankle sprains is to maintain good balance, muscle strength and flexibility.

Warm up and stretch before doing exercises and vigorous activities, and slow down or stop when you feel pain or fatigue.

- Pay attention to walking, running or working surfaces.
- Wear supportive shoes that are designed for your foot type and activity.
- Use a brace if your ankle is chronically unstable (consult your physiotherapist).
- Consult your Physiotherapist for an exercise program to both rehabilitate a sprain and to help prevent recurrence.
- Consult your Physiotherapist for advice regarding safe return to your individual sports and activities.

For treatment of your ankle sprains,

**CALL OR VISIT US AT:**

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## Our Mission Statement:

**Our Expert services are committed and caring. We continue to excel in serving generations of the Burnaby Community.**

# Ankle Sprains

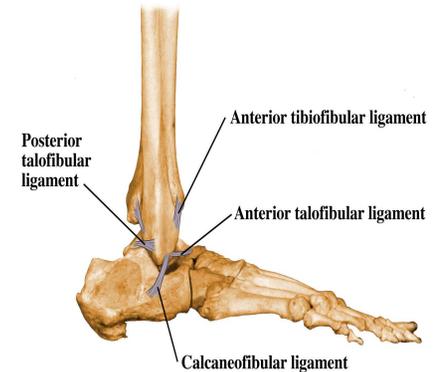


Figure 1



**Physiotherapists  
Your Body Specialists**

## What is an Ankle Sprain?

A sprained ankle is a common injury that can happen to athletes as well as non-athletes. It can happen when playing sports that involve running or jumping, or when you simply step on an uneven surface, and “roll over” on the ankle.

The ligaments of the ankle attach one bone to another and hold the ankle bones in position (see Figure 1 on the front of this brochure).

Ligaments have a limited amount of stretch when a force such as twisting or turning is applied. When the force is removed, the ligament usually returns to its normal length. When a ligament is stretched beyond its limit, a sprain occurs. The amount of force applied to the ankle and the amount of damage that occurs to the ligament determines the grade or severity of the sprain.

- **Grade 1 Sprain:** Excessive stretching of the ligament, but no fibers are torn. Heat, redness, and swelling are minimal.
- **Grade 2 Sprain:** Partial tearing of the ligament. Heat, redness, and swelling are more severe. Bruising is usually present.
- **Grade 3 Sprain:** Complete tear of the ligament. Heat, swelling, redness, and bruising are pronounced. The joint is considered unstable without ligament support.

## What Should I do?

See a Physiotherapist as soon as possible. It is important to assess the grade of sprain to determine the most appropriate treatment from the beginning. Early intervention assists in efficient and optimal healing and helps to prevent chronic, long term problems. For an acutely sprained ankle, **R.I.C.E.** is always appropriate.

**R: Rest-** Reduce your activity levels and limit weight bearing as advised by your physiotherapist.

**I: Ice-** Apply ice for 10-15 minutes every 2-4 hours as long as redness, pain, heat, and swelling are apparent.

**C: Compression—** Compression dressings such as a tensor bandage, ankle brace, or tape provide support and immobilization.

**E: Elevation—** Elevate your foot above heart level as long as swelling is still apparent.

## Physiotherapy Treatment

Physiotherapy treatments are based on assessment findings, and your individual needs and goals. Treatment components may include:

- Education regarding anatomy, cause and type of injury. A treatment plan and prognosis will be provided.
- Electrical modalities to reduce pain, swelling and inflammation.
- Manual therapy to restore normal joint motion and to mobilize scar tissue.
- Gait re-education may be necessary if you are unable to walk normally. Crutches and / or a cane are required if you cannot walk without a limp. The need for a brace can be determined by your physiotherapist.
- Exercise programs to restore normal strength, flexibility, endurance, balance, coordination and proprioception (your body’s ability to sense position and movement of the ankle).