lifestrength
PHYSICAL THERAPY, INC.

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Ankle Sprain

What is it?

An over-stretching or tearing of the ligaments that hold the ankle and foot bones together. The ligaments can be injured by abnormally twisting, turning, or rolling the foot while playing a sport, working out, or stepping onto an uneven surface. Ankle sprains lead to instability of the ankle and an increased risk for re-injury in that area. Sprains are graded 1-3 based on severity.

How do I treat it?

Use **P.R.I.C.E.** immediately.

Protection—Have the ankle taped, braced or splinted to prevent further injury.
Rest—Avoid walking or weight-bearing activities. Use crutches if you are unable to walk without limping.
Ice—Place an ice bag wrapped in a towel on the ankle for 20 minutes, 3-5 times per day for the first 1-3 days. Leave the ice off for at least an hour and a half between uses.
Compression—Wrap an elastic bandage from just below the toes to the mid-calf using even pressure, to help decrease swelling. Loosen the bandage if toes become cold or turn blue.
Elevation—Keep the ankle above heart level as much as possible.

Anti-inflammatory medications may also be prescribed initially. Most ankle sprains are not treated surgically. Early rehabilitation can be helpful in managing pain and swelling, maintaining flexibility, and strengthening weak muscles. Once normal flexibility and strength have been restored, rehabilitation will focus on maintaining ankle stability and gradually increasing activities that involve cutting and turning movements at the ankle.

How can I prevent it?

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

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It is important to warm-up before doing exercises or playing sports and wear shoes with an appropriate amount of stability depending on the activity you are involved in. Listen to your body and take it easy when you feel pain or fatigue sets in. You may increase your risk of injury by continuing activity beyond the point of fatigue.