

Ankle Sprains

Management and Treatment

Lateral Ankle sprain is one of the most common injuries. Rolling your ankle outwards tend to strain the ligaments on the outside. And how often, than not, we end up going to a traditional masseur or our TCM practitioner for treatment. Ask ourselves, how often following the first sprain, do we re-sprain the injured ankle in the past 6 months? Chances are, we would have at least sprained it about another one time, if not twice.

Contrary to our Asian belief, going to see a TCM immediately to get the ankle rubbed and manipulated, is actually bad for the recovery of the ankle. This is because when we sprain our ankle, we have actually caused some small tears in our ligaments. Going for a massage and manipulation of the ankle immediately by the TCM would actually cause more damage to the ankle, by not just causing more tears to the ligaments but will also strain the muscles of the ankle.

What to do immediately after an Ankle Sprain?

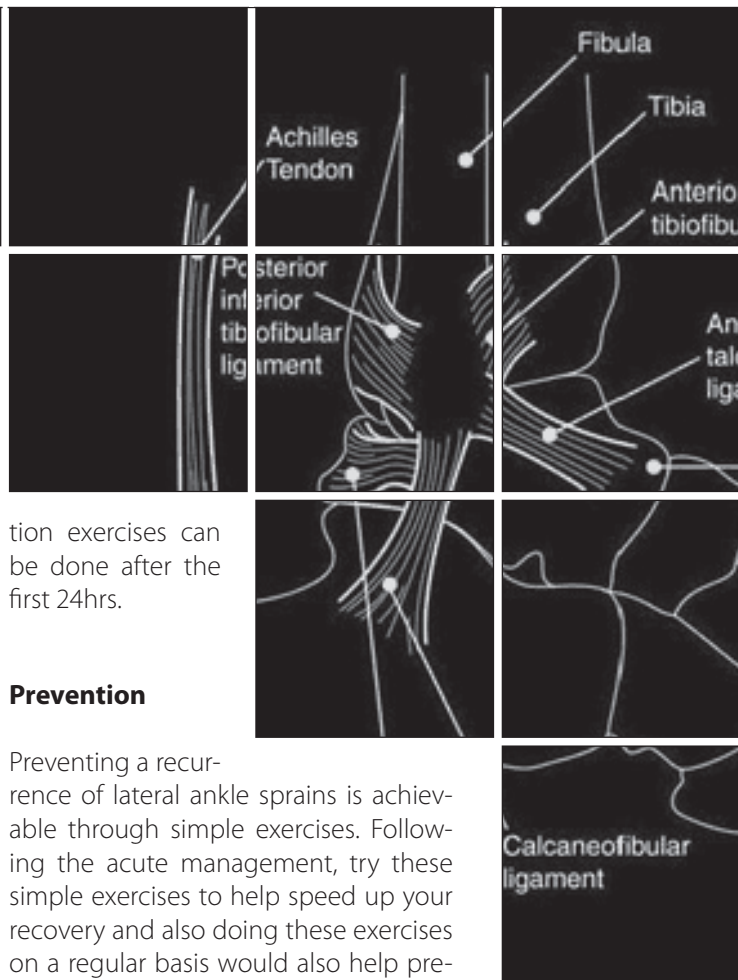
Thus, when you just sprained your ankle, remember

- R**est (Immediately rest the injured ankle)
- I**ce (Apply an ice pack to the outside of the ankle)
- C**ompress (Use a compression bandage to hold down the ice pack)
- E**levate (Raise your injured ankle above the level of your chest when you lie down)
- R**eview (If the swelling, pain and bruising doesn't go away in 48hrs, go and see your Doctor)

This management should be done immediately and sustained for at least for the next 48hrs. The icing should be done for 20mins every 2 hourly, as it would prevent excessive swelling which would inhibit your recovery. In acute injuries, like your ankle sprain, using heat and massage just does more HARM. In this sense, remember NOT to do HARM, especially within the first 48-72hrs

- H**eat (Do not apply a hot pack or any heating oilments)
- A**lcohol (Do not go drinking or have any forms of alcohol)
- R**unning (DO not aggravate your ankle injury by running. High heel shoes are strongly discouraged)
- M**assage (NO deep tissue massages as it would cause more damage to your ligaments)

The first 48-72hrs following your ankle sprain is most critical as you do not want to cause further damage to the injury. Following initial management for the pain and swelling, gently range of mo-



tion exercises can be done after the first 24hrs.

Prevention

Preventing a recurrence of lateral ankle sprains is achievable through simple exercises. Following the acute management, try these simple exercises to help speed up your recovery and also doing these exercises on a regular basis would also help prevent the recurrence.

Range-of-motion Exercise

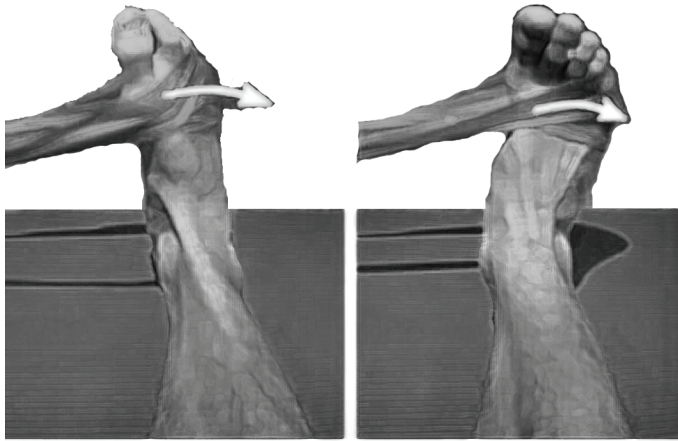
- Alphabet Exercise
 - » Draw each letter of the alphabet in the air using your big toe as the "pencil". Repeat the entire alphabet 5 times.



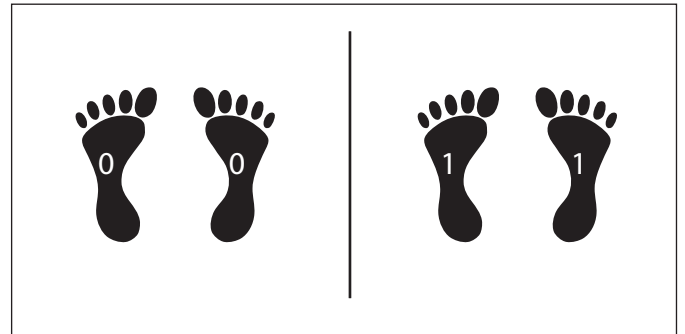
Ankle Strengthening Exercise

- Elastic band exercise
 - » Attach one end of an elastic band to the leg of a chair. Loop the opposite end around the foot of the injured ankle. Keeping the heel on the ground, slide the foot outward (evert) as far as possible and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 3 sets of 10 repetitions.

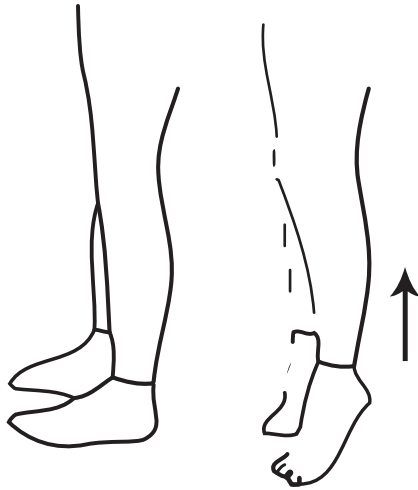
Activity-specific Exercise



- 2 foot lateral jumps
 - » Start with both feet on the side of a straight line. Hop side to side over the line for 3 sets of 10 repetitions.



- Heel Raises
 - » Rock back on the heels of both feet and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 3 sets of 10 repetitions.



Ankle Proprioception/ Balance Exercise

- Single leg balance
 - » Stand and balance on the affected leg for 30 to 60 seconds, repeat 3 sets. To increase the intensity, stand on a folded towel or repeat the exercise with eyes closed.



For more information, please contact your Family Doctor