

Lateral Ankle Sprain - Phase 1 Rehab

Goal: Reduce pain and swelling, walk with a normal gait

What I know: Early mobilisation, ice and compression enhance recovery

What I need to do: Ice, compression, elevation, mobilise as tolerated

I am fit for Phase 2 when: I can walk without significant pain and with a normal stride

There is strong evidence that early activity rather than strict rest enhances recovery. You should however stay within the realms of comfort and avoid activities that cause significant discomfort. For a mild ankle sprain this may mean walking immediately. For a severe ankle sprain however you may need to take things more slowly. If you cannot bear weight through the foot then the following phases may be useful.



Figure 1 You do not have to be playing sport to suffer a lateral ankle sprain.

Mild Ankle Sprain

Walk as able

Severe Ankle Sprain

Day 1 and 2 - Non weight bearing using crutches (the foot does not touch the ground)

Day 3 and 4 - Touch weight bearing only using crutches i.e. the foot touches the ground but no significant weight goes through the foot.

Day 5 and 6 - Partial weight bearing using crutches i.e. put more and more weight through the foot but continue to support yourself with crutches

Day 7 - Full weight bearing i.e. no crutches

Ice protocol:

Apply ice for 10 minutes, rest for 10 minutes, apply ice for another 10 minutes. Repeat every 2 hours.

This process has been shown to be superior to other methods of ice application. The 10 minute break decreases the likelihood of ice burn while still allowing cooling of deeper tissues.

Compression:

Using a tubigrip sleeve is often all that is required for compression

Anti-inflammatory medications:

Use these as prescribed