

Ankle Sprain

Ankle sprains are injuries to the ankle ligaments, the “bands” that hold the ankle joint together. They occur when the foot twists or turns beyond its normal range of motion, causing the ligaments to stretch beyond their normal length.

An ankle sprain can range from mild to severe, depending on how badly the ligament is damaged or how many ligaments are injured. An ankle sprain is given a grade from 1 to 3 depending on the amount of ligament damaged. A grade 1 sprain is mild, grade 2 is moderate, and grade 3 is severe.

Ankle sprains also are classified as acute, chronic, or recurrent:

- An **acute sprain** occurred recently—usually within the past few weeks—and is in an active stage of healing.
- A **chronic sprain** continues to cause symptoms beyond the expected time for normal healing.
- A **recurrent** sprain occurs easily and frequently, usually with only minimal force.



More than **25,000**
people a day will sprain
their ankle.

HOW A PHYSICAL THERAPIST CAN HELP

The first 24 to 48 hours

Ankle sprains usually are treated by resting the ankle on a pillow or stool, using elastic bandages or supports, and 10-minute ice treatments. A physical therapist can decide if you should use crutches or a cane to protect your ankle while it is healing.

As You Recover

Your physical therapist will select from treatments including:

- Range-of-motion exercises
- Muscle-strengthening exercises
- Body awareness and balance training
- Functional training
- Activity-specific training