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Can i walk on my sprained ankle

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy www.csp.org.uk Chen ET, Borg-Stein J, McInnis KC. Ankle sprains: evaluation, rehabilitation, and prevention. Curr Sports Med Rep 2019; 18(6):217-23. doi: 10.1249/JSR.0000000000000603 Sprains and strains. NICE Clinical Knowledge Summaries. cks.nice.org.uk, last revised April 2020 Sports injuries: acute. Brukner & Khan's Clinical Sports Medicine (5th ed, online). McGraw-Hill Medical. csm.mhmedical.com, published 2017 Ankle sprains. MSD manuals. msdmanuals.com, last full review/revision August 2019 Vuurberg G, Hoorntje A, Wink LM, et al. Diagnosis, treatment and prevention of ankle sprains: update of an evidence-based clinical guideline. Br J Sports Med 2018; 52:956 Ankle sprain. Medscape. medscape.com, updated 14 January 2019 When to visit an urgent care centre (walk-in centre or minor injury unit). NHS. www.nhs.uk, last reviewed 5 June 2018 Treatment of sports injuries. Brukner & Khan's Clinical Sports Medicine (5th ed, online). McGraw-Hill Medical. csm.mhmedical.com, published 2017 Find a physio. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. www.csp.org.uk, last reviewed 13 March 2018 Reviewed by Pippa Coulter, Freelance Health Editor, December 2020 Expert reviewer, Michelle Njagi, Senior MSK Physiotherapist at Bupa Next review due December 2023 Do not walk on a sprained ankle. The inflamed tissue needs time to heal, and walking on it too soon may cause more damage Ankle sprains are common musculoskeletal injuries that can occur from playing sports or from everyday activities. When the foot lands awkwardly, when the ground is uneven, or when an unusual amount of force is applied to the joint, an unnatural twisting motion of the ankle joint can occur resulting in tissue injury and inflammation of the ankle. Symptoms of a sprained ankle include: Swelling (may be severe)Pain, especially when weight bearingInability to bear weight on the ankleRedness and warmthPopping sensation or sound at the time of injuryTenderness BruisingLimited range of motionInstability Ankle stiffnessSkin discoloration Limping Sudden stretching that is more than normal can injure ligaments in the ankle and result in an ankle sprain. Some ways this unnatural twisting motion of the ankle joint can occur include: Foot lands awkwardly, such as when running, stepping up or down, or even during routine activities such as getting out of bedWhen the ground is uneven or there is an irregular surface, such as stepping in a hole or bump Sports where one player steps on another player, causing one player's foot to roll inwardWhen an unusual amount of force is applied to the jointInversion ankle sprain injuries, in which the foot rolls inward, are more common than eversion injuries (also called a high ankle sprain), in which the foot twists outward. A sprained ankle is diagnosed with a physical exam of the ankle and foot. Imaging tests may be needed to check for fracture or other serious injury, including: An ankle sprain diagnosis is based on grades. Generally, the higher the grade, the more damage to the ligament. Grade IOnly minor damage to the ligamentNo instability of the ankle joint Grade IIModerate to severe damage to the ligamentSome slight instability but ankle function is intactGrade IIIComplete disruption of the ligament(s). Ankle is unstable and may require surgery Pictures of the 7 Riskiest Workout Moves, and How to Improve Them See Slideshow Treatment for a sprained ankle is usually aimed at helping reduce inflammation, which can help relieve pain and aid healing. RICE methodRest: may use a brace, splint, or crutches to take weight off the ankle Ice: helps decrease pain, swelling, and rednessIf done immediately after the injury, it may prevent some inflammationUse an ice pack or ice wrapped in a towelApply ice for 20 minutes at a time, several times dailyCompression: helps support the ankle and prevent inflammationUse elastic wraps such as Ace bandagesDo not wrap too tightlyElevation: keep the injured area propped up to help reduce fluid buildup in the injured tissueTry to prop the ankle above the level of the heartOther home treatments for sprained ankle include: Medical treatment for sprained ankle includes: Using a brace, cast, or walking boot to reduce motion of the ankleCrutches may be used to avoid putting weight on the injured ankleFor severe pain, narcotics may be prescribedWalking on a sprained ankle is not advised. After a sprain occurs, it needs time to heal before weight-bearing. Walking or weight bearing too soon may slow healing or cause further damage. Complications of a sprained ankle include:Prolonged painPersistent swellingStiffnessInstabilityNerve dysfunction Sprained ankles are often accidents but it may be possible to prevent some occurrences: Wear the appropriate shoes for an activityBalance trainingStrength and flexibility exercises for the ankleTape a weak ankle before participating in sportsIf you have recurrent sprains, an ankle brace may helpKeep the home clear of obstacles that could cause injuryMake sure a playing field is an even surfaceTreat risk factors for getting sprained ankles such as flat feet or bunions Share on PinterestNadine Greeff/Stocksy UnitedAnkle sprains are a real pain — especially if they sideline you from physical activity. Ankle injuries are far too common. A 2019 research review showed that approximately 2 million acute ankle sprains occur each year in the United States, making it one of the most common musculoskeletal injuries. And when you consider that it takes between 3 to 4 weeks to heal a moderate ankle sprain and 3 to 6 months for a more severe injury to heal, finding the right treatment is key. The good news is you can heal from an ankle sprain and get back to doing the things you enjoy with the proper:diagnosisrestrehabilitationKeep reading to find out about the different types of ankle sprains, the best way to treat them, and how to prevent them from occurring again. If you've been told you have an ankle sprain, you're probably wondering how severe the sprain is, and how long it will take to heal. An ankle sprain involves one or more of the ligaments that connect your bones in your leg to your bones in your foot. Your ankle ligaments keep your bones from moving out of place. When you sprain your ankle, you stretch or tear a ligament(s). "In general, the more severe the sprain, the longer the recovery," says Eric Sampsell, a physical therapist at The Centers for Advanced Orthopaedics. Sampsell says sprains are defined by grades, and are ranked from mild to severe. The approximate healing times correspond with these grades as follows: First degree or grade 1 ankle sprain"A first degree sprain is a mild tear of the ligament, causing mild swelling and pain, and tends to recover quickly," says Sampsell. First degree sprains often take 3 weeks to heal. But some people can recover in less time, while some need 4 or 5 weeks. Second degree or grade 2 ankle sprainA little more severe is a second degree sprain, which Sampsell says usually involves 50 percent of the ligament tearing and will have more swelling and pain and loss of mobility. When you're diagnosed with a second degree sprain, you can anticipate a longer recovery than 4 weeks. In general, a second degree sprain can take 4 to 6 weeks to heal. Third degree or grade 3 ankle sprain A third degree sprain is a complete tear, which Sampsell says will take much longer to heal. This sprain will require some patience since you can expect anywhere from 3 to 6 months for recovery.The best way to treat an ankle sprain begins with a proper diagnosis and treatment plan. "It's not uncommon for an ankle sprain to be misdiagnosed, under-treated, or have compounding factors if left to heal on its own," says Emily Sandow, DPT, OCS, program manager of physical therapy at Harkness Center for Dance Injuries at NYU Langone Health. But you can avoid many of these complications by following a good physical therapy program.Step 1: RICEThe first step after an injury is to:restreduce the swellingprevent further injuryThe American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) recommends:R: rest the ankle:I: ice for 20 minutes, three to four times a dayC: apply compression (if needed)E: elevate the footIf surgery is not needed, you'll move on to the recovery and rehab phase. Step 2: RecoveryIn the first 2 weeks following an injury, Sandow says that there can be a quick decrease of pain and an improvement in your ankle's movement and function. "Some people can return to activities within 1 to 3 weeks depending on the demands of their daily life," she explains. However, Sandow points out that certain people may continue to experience pain 1 year after an ankle injury. That's why early intervention is critical. "Unless otherwise told by your doctor, starting weight-bearing exercises right away, with caution, can be beneficial for the healing process, unless there is a fracture involved," Sampsell explains. If an ankle sprain is not taken care of properly through physical therapy and medical care, Sampsell says the ligament may heal slightly stretched, which can lead to future ankle sprains. "In some cases, the domed bone at the top of the ankle, the talus, can get very stiff, which may limit the mobility of the ankle," he says. Additionally, the fibula can move slightly anteriorly. If this happens, Sampsell says a skilled physical therapist can perform mobilization to help restore normal motion and function.Changes in movement patterns can initially be protective, but Sandow recommends returning to normal walking patterns as early as possible. "Walking unnaturally will perpetuate a limp and cause abnormal loading and stress on the foot and ankle," she says. Step 3: RehabilitationFor a faster return to sports and activity and re-injury prevention, Sandow says a supervised and specific exercise program should be implemented by a physical therapist. "This will speed up the recovery, increase confidence and strength in the ankle, prevent recurrence of the ankle injury, and allow a confident return to a normal lifestyle," she explains. Sandow says a good rehabilitation program includes: restoring range of motionrebuilding strengthrebuilding balance and confidence in the ankleprogressively reintroducing high impact loadsAdditionally, Sandow says training specifically in balance and control can:accelerate the recovery of an ankle sprainprevent the recurrence of an ankle sprainprevent the long-term risk of chronic ankle instabilitySome people can recall the exact moment a sprain occurred, while others have to really think about what they were doing and how it impacted the ankle. Common causes of ankle sprain include:walking or running on uneven surfacesfalling downstairs that require rolling or twisting of the foot or cutting actions jumping, then landing hard on your footsomeone stepping or landing on your foot These movements and activities involve the foot or lower leg experiencing a sudden twisting force or roll, which forces the ankle joint out of normal position. When this happens, you can sprain a ligament(s) in this area. Another cause of ankle sprains is a previous sprain. According to the AAOS, once you experience an ankle sprain, it's more likely to happen again, especially if the ligaments do not heal. Preventing ankle sprains from happening in the first place or occurring again is ideal, especially if you are an athlete or physically active. "There is a strong correlation between ankle sprains and weakness through the gluteal muscles or core," says Sampsell. Since the muscles on the side of your hip help stabilize your entire leg, he says a weakness could cause the ankle to roll out and a sprain to occur. The good news, says Sampsell is a 2014 research review showed that balance training, like balancing on one foot, can help prevent ankle sprains. Following a strength training program that also includes ankle-specific exercises like balancing, band work, and stretching can help prevent future ankle sprains. The amount of time it takes for an ankle sprain to heal depends on the severity of the injury. In general, it will take a minimum of 3 to 4 weeks and up to 6 months for an ankle sprain to heal. That's why getting a proper diagnosis and treatment plan for an ankle sprain is critical. Working with your physician and a skilled physical therapist on the initial treatment as well as the long-term rehab can ensure that you are moving in the right direction. A sprained ankle is an injury to one or more ligaments in the ankle. Mild sprains may involve overstretching and irritating the ligaments, while severe sprains can cause the ligaments to tear completely.Ankle sprains are common injuries, particularly among people who play sports.They can be very painful, and severe sprains can require months of recovery. However, a person can do several things at home to help speed their healing and reduce the risk of reinjury.Below, find out what to do after spraining an ankle. We describe first aid and longer-term methods of supporting recovery.Share on PinterestA temporary bandage can help support the joint and prevent it from moving.Anyone who thinks that they have sprained an ankle should receive first aid.Avoid putting any weight on the ankle, as this increases the risk of broken bones and other injuries. Sit in a comfortable position, with the ankle elevated to reduce swelling.Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs, such as ibuprofen, can also help alleviate swelling and pain.If possible, wear a temporary brace or bandage to support the joint and prevent it from moving.If crutches are available, some people find that they can help with balance and mobility while allowing the ankle to rest.It is difficult to diagnose an ankle sprain based on symptoms alone. For this reason, a person should see a doctor.Most family physicians and doctors at urgent care clinics can quickly diagnose a sprained ankle. If the injury is very serious, they may refer the person to an orthopedist or foot and ankle surgeon.The following methods of home care may support faster recovery while helping to protect against further injuries.RICEThe acronym RICE stands for: rest, ice, compression, and elevation. Doctors often recommend these tactics to reduce swelling and inflammation in the days after an injury.RestResting the ankle is key for healing, and wearing a brace can help stabilize the injured area. Attempting to return to sports or other activities too quickly increases the risk of another injury.IceUsing an ice pack may reduce blood flow to the injury and help ease pain and swelling.The American Academy of Family Physicians suggest applying an ice pack to the sprain for 10–20 minutes at a time. Wrap the pack in a towel before laying it against the skin.However, the National Athletic Trainers' Association reviewed the evidence for the use of ice on injuries in 2013. They found that, while doctors commonly recommend applying ice, there is limited evidence to support its effectiveness.If ice does not help relieve symptoms, use other treatments instead.CompressionCompression helps stabilize the injured joint and may reduce swelling.Try wrapping a bandage around the injured ankle. The bandage should be snug, but not so tight that it digs into the skin, hurts, or causes numbness.ElevationElevating a sprained ankle reduces the accumulation of fluid in the joint. This can ease swelling, which may also help reduce pain.Try sleeping with the foot and ankle propped up on pillows at a level higher than the heart. When sitting or resting, use pillows or a footrest to keep the foot and ankle elevated.HeatHeat increases blood flow to an injury, which can speed healing. Some people also find that it helps relax tight muscles, easing pain and tension.However, do not use heat while the ankle is still swollen, as this can increase inflammation and slow healing.Once the swelling goes down, try applying a heat pack for 15–20 minutes at a time. Some people find relief from alternating heat and ice packs. Only try this after the swelling is gone — not immediately after the injury.StretchingAn injury to the ankle puts nearby muscles and other structures at risk of damage. This is especially likely if the tissues have become weak from disuse.Stretching keeps the muscles strong and limber. It also helps more blood circulate to the area, which may help the ankle heal faster.Gently stretch the ankle by moving it in all directions at least three times each day. Try flexing the foot forward, then backward, or rolling it clockwise, then counterclockwise.However, it is important to avoid overextending the ankle or moving it in any direction that hurts.WalkingThe pain and swelling that immediately follow an ankle sprain may be severe. This can make it impossible for a person to put any weight on the joint.As the swelling goes down, walking can promote healing. Start by walking short distances within the house. Then, gradually build up to longer distances as the ankle begins to heal.However, walking may require a person to hold the injured ankle in an unusual position or twist the body to avoid putting excess weight on the joint. If this is the case, wait 1–2 days, then try again.ExerciseExercise can restore strength and balance, while preventing the muscles in the area from weakening. This can reduce the risk of another sprain.After the swelling goes down and walking is comfortable, it may be a good idea to start exercising the ankle.A person can try performing the following exercises for 10–15 minutes every other day:On a low step, stand with the heels hanging backward over the edge. Drop the heels slightly, and hold the position for a few seconds. Then, elevate the heels above the toes.Balance on one foot for 30–60 seconds, then switch sides, to promote equal strength in both joints.Loop an elastic exercise band under the foot for gentle resistance. Move the ankle clockwise, then counterclockwise.Play catch while balancing on one leg, then the other.MassageMassage can help ease pain while promoting blood flow to the sprained area.If the injury is particularly severe or painful, a person should seek advice from a qualified massage therapist.For less severe injuries, a person can try gentle massage at home. Some people find that massaging the bottom of the foot or heel provides relief. Others prefer to massage around or just above the ankle.A person should stop massaging the area if it causes pain or worsens symptoms.Physical therapyPhysical therapy may especially benefit anyone who experiences long-term pain following a serious sprain and anyone with a history of similar injuries.A physical therapist will perform an exam of the person's ankle to identify weak muscles and other issues that can cause pain and increase the risk of injury.They will also ask about the person's lifestyle, including any sports.The physical therapist will use this information to create a customized exercise plan that promotes healing and eases pain.According to a popular myth, a doctor can do nothing to treat a sprain. It is true that sprains do not usually require casts and often heal on their own.However, the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons recommend that anyone who suspects that they have a sprain see a doctor. They may be mistaken and have a different injury that requires treatment, or they may have additional injuries, such as broken bones, which is common.Also, a doctor can assess the severity of the sprain. Particularly serious sprains can require surgery, physical therapy, and other long-term treatments. Delaying medical attention can delay rehabilitation.If the pain is mild and a person prefers home treatment, they can wait a day or two. If the swelling does not go down or the pain gets worse, they should see a doctor.Sprains are common and usually heal on their own. However, severe sprains that completely sever the ligament may require months of healing and possibly surgery.Do not ignore the pain of an ankle sprain or assume that there is nothing a doctor can do. Prompt treatment can speed recovery and reduce the risk of a chronic or secondary injury.

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