

Sprained Ankle

A sprained ankle injury usually involves a tear of one or more of the ligaments on the outside (lateral aspect) of the ankle.

There are three bands which make up the lateral ligament complex functioning to provide stability to the ankle joint.

Lateral ligaments are injured when they are overstretched (often referred to as a sprain). This occurs when the ankle is forcefully rolled inwards (inversion sprain). This can happen:

- During rapid changes of direction
- Running/walking on uneven surfaces
- Jumping and landing unevenly
- Stepping on an object on the ground



Symptoms

Pain and tenderness is a predominant symptom of an ankle sprain. The pain may be prevalent on the outer part of the ankle, however in severe cases there may be tenderness over the inside of the ankle

Swelling and bruising are common and are often accompanied by lack of movement.

Furthermore a lateral ligament injury may also cause discomfort when weight bearing, walking and running.

Treatment

In most cases, lateral ankle sprains are purely soft tissue injuries which are managed conservatively. In severe cases where there is a fracture or damage to other structures there may be the need for further intervention.

The general physiotherapy treatments can include

- **Rest and Ice:** Limiting activity can assist in the recovery process and allow the pain and inflammation to subside. Ice can aid with reducing swelling and inflammation.
- **Dry Needling:** Can assist in healing the affected lesions in the tissue and increase mobility.
- **Stretching and Strengthening Exercises:** A specialised program will assist in increasing the strength and flexibility of the ankle ligaments and surrounding muscles.
- **Soft Tissue Massage:** will assist in relaxing and lengthening the affected ligaments and muscles
- **Taping or Bracing:** To ensure adequate support when returning to sport

Did you know...?

Approximately 90% of ankle sprains are lateral ligament sprains.