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Sprained ankle

***Information for
children, parents and carers***



**Accident and Emergency Department
Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital**

What is a sprained ankle?

When you “go over” on your ankle, you stretch the ligament. This leads to bruising, swelling and pain. The ligaments are the bands that hold the joint tight. They can be slow to get better, but here is some advice on how you can help yourself.

How can I treat it myself?

For the first 48 hours after your injury the following can help:

Protection This is provided by the strapping or Tubigrip® we applied to your ankle. Take this off after 3 to 5 days when your pain allows.

Rest Don't push the movements or your activity levels.

Ice Wrap a bag of frozen peas or crushed ice in a wet towel. Place over your ankle on the side that is most painful. Do this for 5 minutes, 2 or 3 times a day. Carry on with this until the pain and swelling go away.

Compression Your strapping or Tubigrip® will provide this.

Elevation Keeping your foot raised can help your circulation and reduce any swelling.

Regular paracetamol / ibuprofen will also help reduce any pain. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions on the packet or bottle.

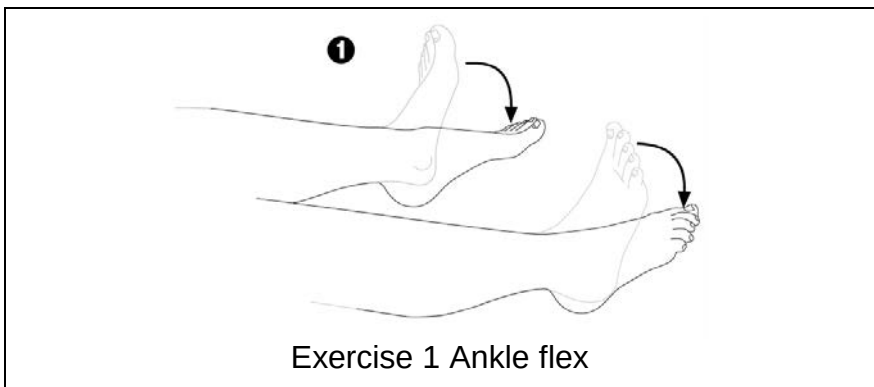
When can I put weight on my foot?

Gradually over the first week you should be able to get all your weight onto your leg and walk normally. Gradually stop using any walking aids such as a stick or crutch.

When can I start exercising?

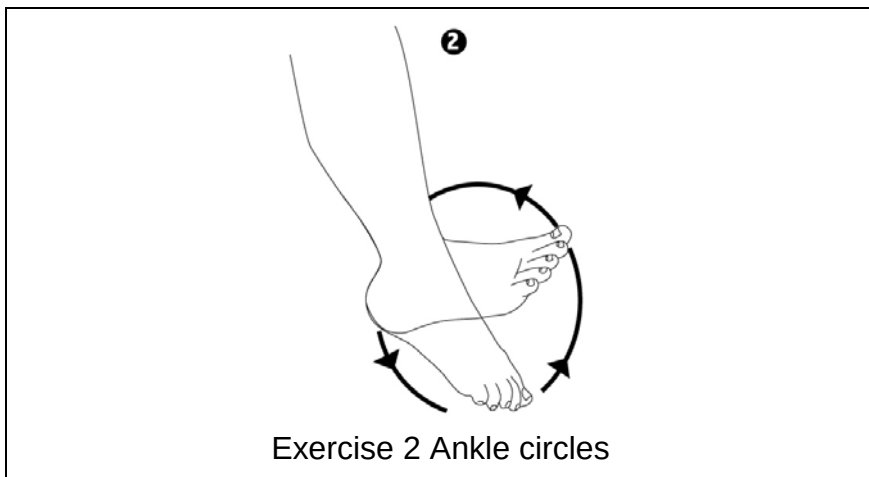
After 48 hours

Here are a few exercises to start after 48 hours. Gradually increase the range of movement over a few days.



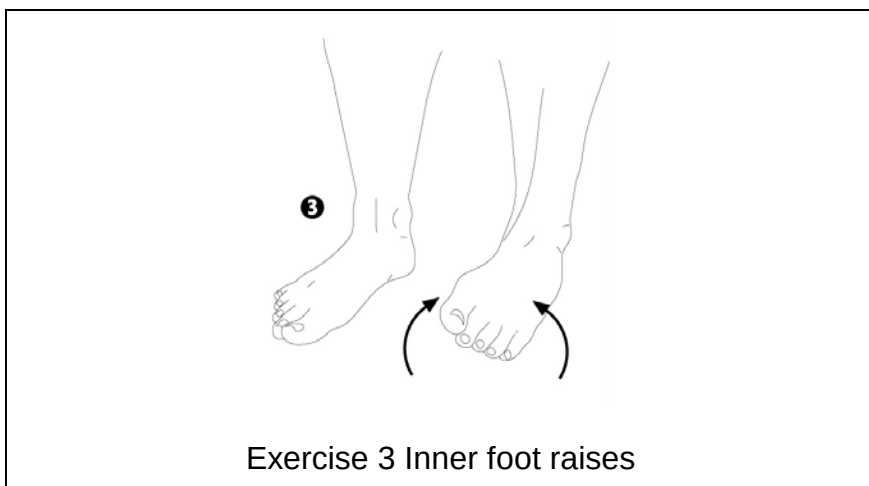
Exercise 1:

Lying on your back, or sitting, bend and straighten your ankles. Repeat 10 times.



Exercise 2:

When sitting or lying, rotate your ankle. Then change direction. Repeat 10 times.

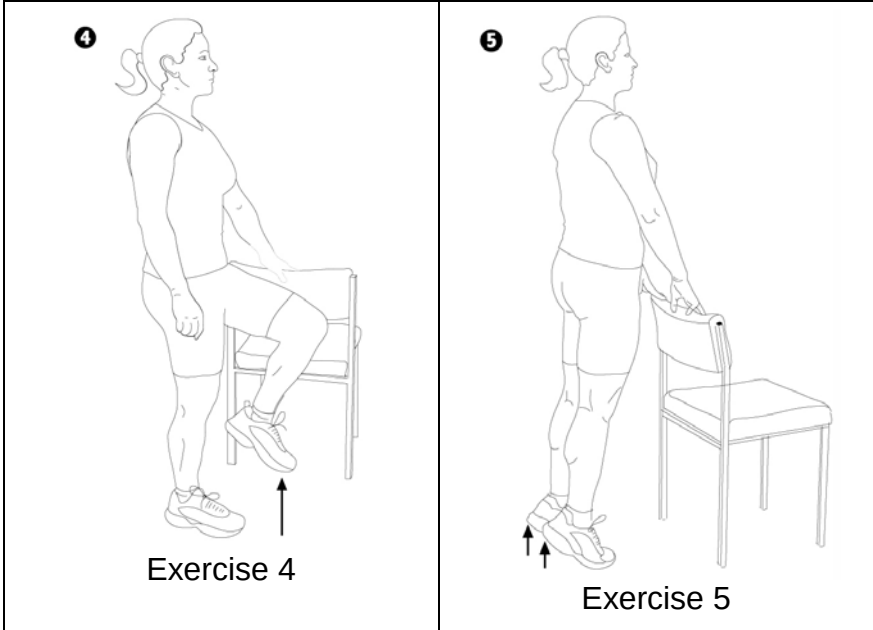


Exercise 3:

When sitting with your foot on the floor, raise the inner border of your foot (big toe) and then the outer border (little toe). Repeat 10 times.

Within a week of your injury

Stretches: you should start stretching exercises within a week of your injury, as your pain allows. Start gently at first.



Exercise 4:
Stand on one leg (your injured leg). Make sure that you have support available. Try to balance for 30 seconds. Repeat 10 times.

Your balance will be poor at first. It is very important to improve it.

Exercise 5:
Stand. Push up on your toes. Repeat 10 times.



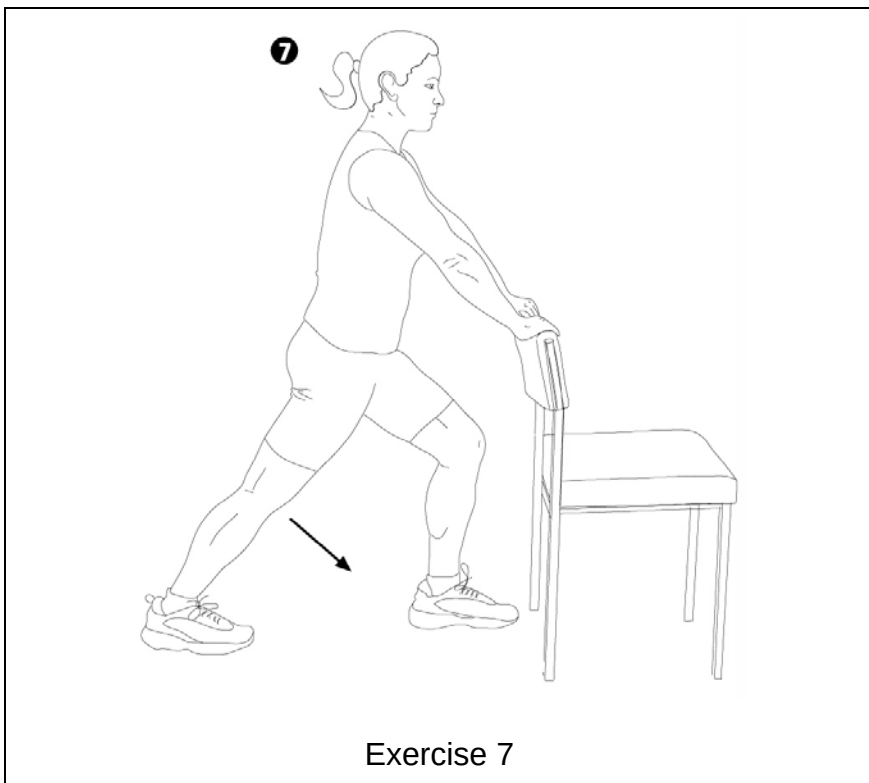
Exercise 6

Exercise 6:

When standing, tighten your buttocks and bend your knees. Your knees should end up over your toes. Don't go any further. Repeat 10 times.

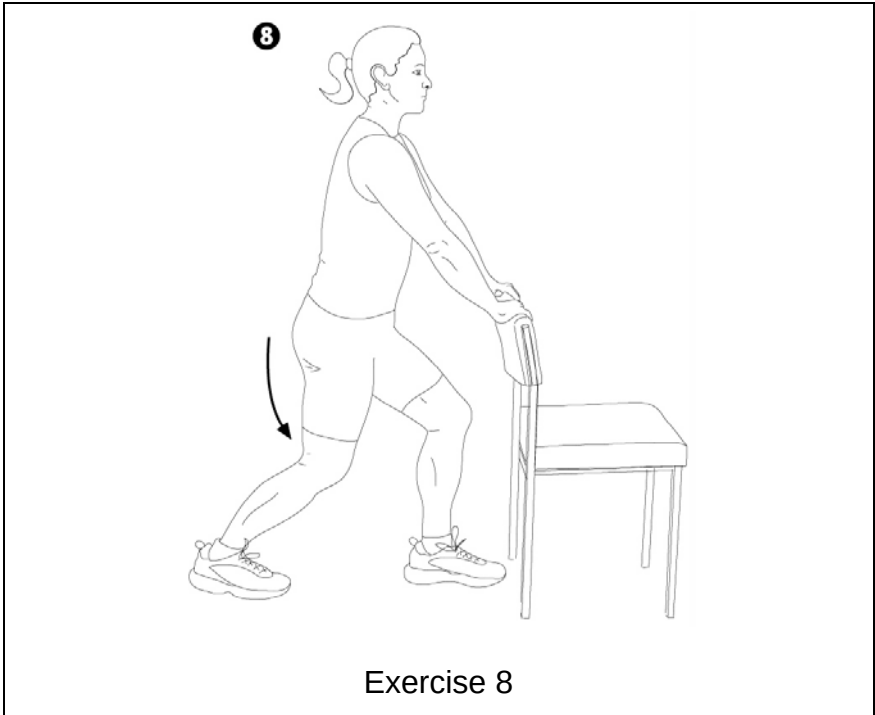
One or two weeks after your injury

Later (about 1 to 2 weeks after your injury and depending on your pain), you can move on to the following exercises. Also, gradually increase your activity levels.



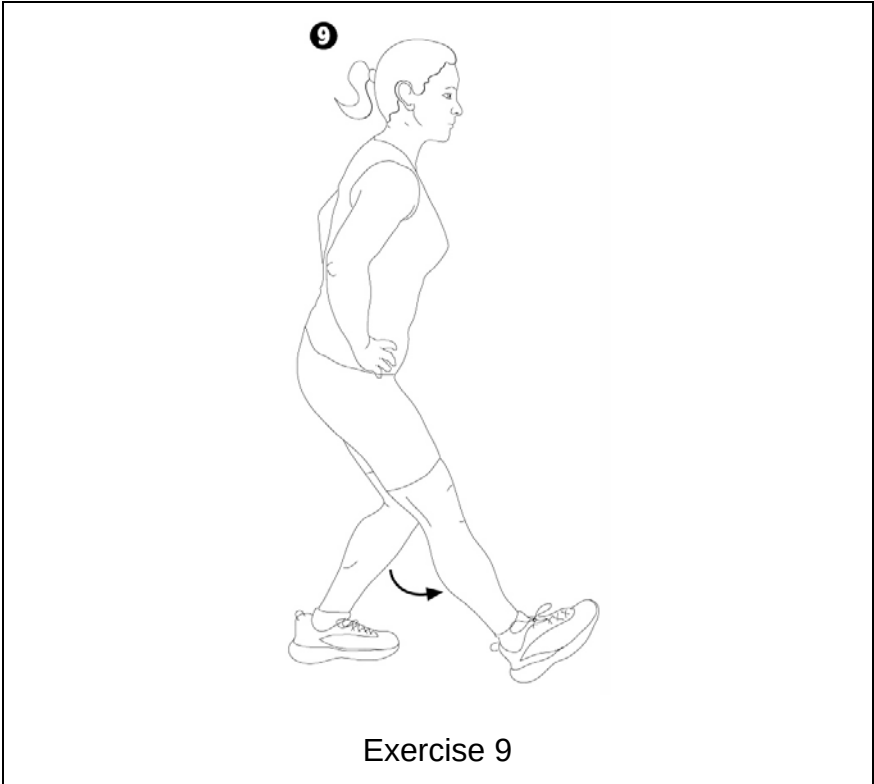
Exercise 7:

Stand in a walking position with the leg to be stretched straight behind you and your other leg bent in front of you. Support yourself (for example with a chair). Lean your body forwards and down until you feel stretching in the calf of the straight leg. Hold for 30 seconds, then relax. Stretch the other leg. Repeat 3 times.



Exercise 8:

Stand in a walking position with the leg to be stretched behind you. Hold on to something (for example the back of a chair). Bend the leg to be stretched and let your body weight stretch your calf without lifting your heel off the floor. Hold for 30 seconds then relax. Repeat 3 times.



Exercise 9:

Stand with the leg to be stretched in front. Ensure your heel is on the floor and your toes pointing to the ceiling. Hold for 30 seconds, then relax. Repeat 3 times.

Balance is often a problem after this kind of injury. You will probably need to work on your balance until it is as good as the other side. This can also help to prevent further injuries.

When can I get back to my normal exercise?

Take things fairly easy at first. Try walking, swimming and cycling, which are all low impact. Start with small amounts of exercise and gradually increase, as pain allows, to activities you did previously, such as running and football.

The pain and swelling should gradually settle. If the problem worsens and this advice is not helping, seek advice from your GP or the Accident & Emergency Department.

Contact number

**Accident & Emergency Department
Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital**

 01224 552041 

The Accident and Emergency Department is open 24 hours a day.

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Ask for leaflet 0671.**

Feedback from the public helped us to develop this leaflet.
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