

Ankle Home Exercise Program I

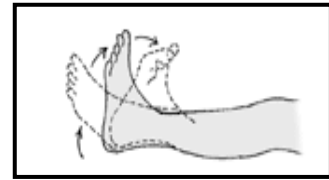
Initial injury management, Range of Motion and Isometric Strengthening

Initial Treatment

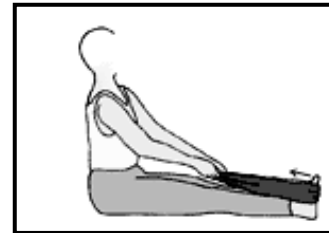
For the first 48 hours following injury, it is important to focus on limiting pain and swelling. Stay off the injured ankle and elevate it above the level of the heart if possible to avoid unnecessary pain and swelling. Also, icing for 20 minutes several times per day and keeping the ankle wrapped in between will help to reduce pain and push swelling out of the area.

Regaining Range of Motion

You can work to prevent stiffness and regain any loss of motion in the ankle during this initial phase of injury. Work on slowly moving in different directions: up and down, side-to-side, circles, and even tracing the alphabet as comfort allows. Try to make each movement as big as possible while avoiding pain. This will also help pump any swelling out of the ankle.



Stretching the Achilles tendon will also help to prevent loss of motion and relieve stiffness. Using a towel, hold onto the ends and wrap it behind the foot. Keep your knee straight and your back upright. Pull back on the towel to bring the foot towards the body. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.



Isometric Strengthening

Isometrics involve resistance training without moving the injured body part. These exercises will allow you to maintain strength without putting the ankle through any painful motions. Begin these when you are able to push against a stationary object with your foot without pain.

- 1) **Plantarflexion** – Using a wall to provide resistance, sit and face towards the wall with the foot placed flat against it. Push down into the wall for 10 seconds. Relax, then repeat. Do 10 times.
- 2) **Dorsiflexion** – Sit in a chair and place the non-injured foot on top of the foot of the injured side to provide resistance. Pull up into the top foot for 10 seconds. Relax, then repeat. Do 10 times.
- 3) **Inversion** – Sit down with the inside of the foot next to the wall. Push the inside of the foot into the wall. Hold for 10 seconds. Relax, then repeat. Do 10 times.
- 4) **Eversion** – Sit down with the outside of the foot next to the wall. Push against the wall using as much force as feels comfortable to the ankle. Hold for 10 seconds. Relax, then repeat. Do 10 times.

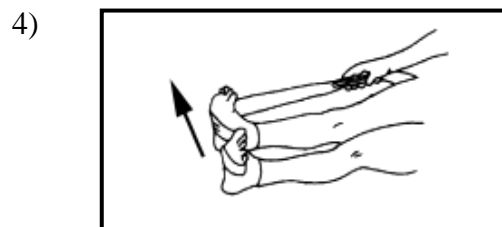
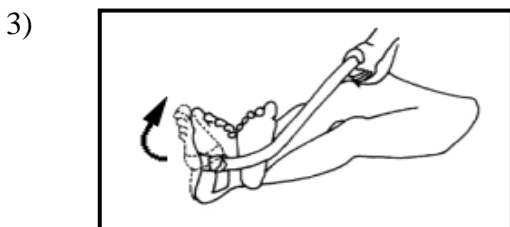
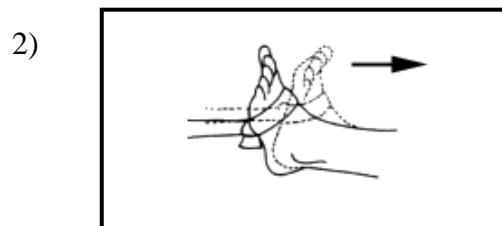
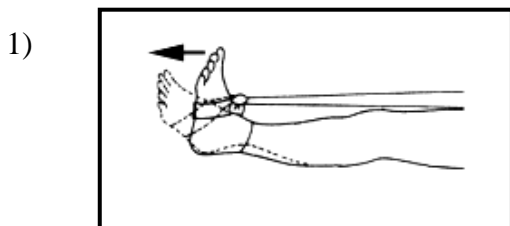
Ankle Home Exercise Program II

Band Strengthening & Balance

Band Strengthening

When movement in the ankle feels comfortable, begin resistance work using an elastic band or tubing. This will further strengthen and support the muscles involved with moving and protecting the ankle. Do 3 sets of 10 repetitions for each exercise.

- 1) **Plantarflexion** – Loop the band around your foot so it won't come off with ankle motion. While pulling back, push against the band with your foot. Hold for a 2-count, then return to your starting position.
- 2) **Dorsiflexion** – Tie the band securely to a post or have someone hold the opposing end in front of you. With some resistance, pull your foot towards you. Hold for a 2-count, then return to your starting position.
- 3) **Inversion** – Cross your legs with the band still attached to your foot. Bring the band around your opposite foot. Swing your foot inward while applying resistance to the band. Hold for a 2-count, then return to your starting position.
- 4) **Eversion** – Hold the band with your opposite hand and bring it around the other foot. Without turning your lower leg, swing your foot outward while applying some resistance with the band. Hold for a 2-count, then return to your starting position.



Balance Training

Injury and inactivity can lead to a loss of balance and stability in the ankle. Helping your body regain proper balance and coordination in the ankle will help prevent reinjury. Stand on a flat surface within an arm's reach next to a wall. Stand on one leg (affected side). Try to balance on the leg for 10 seconds, then relax. Do this 3 times. As your balance and fitness improves, gradually work up to 30 seconds.

When this exercise becomes easy, try standing on a folded towel or a foam mat for a greater challenge. Another way to challenge yourself is to balance with your eyes closed. Again, start at 10 seconds and gradually work your way up to 30 seconds at a time.

Ankle Home Exercise Program III

Advanced exercises and return to sport progression

Advanced Exercises

When you feel comfortable with the ankle's strength and can walk around without pain, try these exercises. Besides working the muscles that support the ankle, these exercises will help to regain balance and coordination.

- 1) **Calf raises** – Stand with feet spread shoulder-width apart. Push up onto your toes and gradually lower heels back to floor. Progress to single-leg calf raises as tolerated. Do 3 sets of 10 repetitions apiece.
- 2) **Squats** – Stand with feet spread shoulder-width apart. Bend down until your knees form a 90-degree angle. Hold for a moment, then stand back up. Be sure to keep your torso upright. Do 3 sets of 10 repetitions apiece.
- 3) **Lunges** – Stand upright with your feet together. Take a step forward with one leg and bend down so that the knee of the rear leg almost touches the floor. Stand back up to the original position, then repeat with the opposite leg. Do 3 sets of 10 repetitions with each leg.

Moving on and returning to sport participation

As your range of motion and strength returns to normal, you may begin to incorporate sport-specific exercises to further improve balance & coordination, cardiovascular conditioning as well as transition yourself back to full sport activity.

- 1) **Running** – Begin with jogging 100 yards, then walk 100 yards. Repeat 3 times. Gradually increase the intensity and duration each day.
- 2) **Figure-8s** – Place 2 cones 10 feet apart. Jog in a figure-8 pattern around the cones 3 times in each direction. Increase the difficulty gradually by increasing the speed and making turns sharper.
- 3) **Box Running** – Place 4 cones to make a 10-yard x 10-yard box. Jog forward along the first side, side-shuttle to the right, run backwards along the other side, the side-shuttle to the left. Increase the size of the box and speed each day to increase the difficulty.
- 4) As your conditioning and coordination improves, slowly incorporate sport-specific drills into your exercise. Start with simple drills that can be done on your own, then increase the difficulty and begin working on drills involving teammates and getting back into practices and games.