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# What to do with a Sprained Ankle

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## Introduction

An ankle sprain occurs when the foot gives way and the ankle is turned inwards or occasionally outwards. This causes damage to the ligaments which leads to swelling and bruising. This can be painful even when resting. The ankle will heal quickly if the following advice is taken.

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### Help ease the pain, swelling and bruising by:

- Applying ice packs (see over)

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### [Video](#)



- Keeping the leg up as much as possible for the first three days. This means lying or sitting with the whole leg supported and the foot higher than the hip. This helps gravity drain any swelling away.

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Begin gentle exercises within 24 hours – normal healing is encouraged by gentle movement.

### How often should I exercise?

- Try to exercise about 3 times a day. Be guided by your pain.

### Stop these exercises if you feel they are:

- Making your symptoms worse or bringing on new pain.

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### [Video](#)



- Bend your ankle pulling whole foot and toes up towards you then point away from you.

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## [Video](#)



- Turn your foot inwards and outwards.

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- Walking will be painful at first but it is important to start walking as soon as possible, unless told not to by your doctor or physiotherapist. Try and walk without a limp using a normal action even when using crutches.
  - Do not stand for long periods - walk short distances or sit with your leg elevated.
  - Tubigrip - this should be double layered with the open end at the top and the fold at the bottom. Try to avoid wrinkling. This helps to reduce swelling.

## Ice Packs

Ice is very useful in reducing the pain and swelling that occurs after the injury, but it must be used correctly otherwise ice burns may occur.

## [Video](#)



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- Wet a flannel or cloth under a cold water tap, and then wring it out so that it is just damp. Place it over the area to be treated.
- Either use crushed ice cubes in a plastic bag or a large packet of frozen peas (the ice must be small to mould to the skin and also avoid ice burns). Place on top of the flannel.
- Leave the ice pack on for approximately 10 minutes. This can be repeated two to three times per day if needed.

## For further information

Please email [ghnt.newcastlegatesheadtims@nhs.net](mailto:ghnt.newcastlegatesheadtims@nhs.net), ring on **0191 2138800** or visit our website at: [www.tims.nhs.uk](http://www.tims.nhs.uk) which provides online guidance and support on managing your musculoskeletal (MSK) condition effectively.

The NHS website also provides trusted online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare to help you manage your condition and/or inform your choices about your health: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk).

## Useful links

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) can offer on-the-spot advice and information about the NHS. You can contact them on freephone **0800 032 02 02** or e-mail [northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk](mailto:northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk).



## Tyneside Integrated Musculoskeletal Service

TIMS is a partnership between Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust

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