



Algorithm for the Treatment Progression of Ankle Sprains “10 Things You Need to Know”

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There are many ways to treat a sprained ankle and before starting on this progression please consult with a certified athletic trainer or physical therapist to help with the progression through these 10 phases.

1. PRICE (Protection, Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation) – Crutches can be used early if it is too painful to put any weight on the foot. They are generally only needed for the first week or so.
2. Early ROM exercises (alphabet) – Imagine you have a pencil between your toes. Keep your leg still and move nothing but your ankle. Write the alphabet three times through in small letters, capital letters, and in cursive.
3. Early weight bearing working on proper gait and balance exercises. It is OK to have a little discomfort but keep an eye on the swelling. If your ankle swells more, then you are not quite ready to wean completely from crutches. Remember, the key to an early return is NORMAL walking
4. Later stage ROM exercises (prayer stretch with toes up and toes down, joint mobs for subtalar joint performed by a physical therapist or athletic trainer)



Notice the arrow and the fact that during the prayer stretch with the toes down we are working on ankle “plantarflexion”. This is often the last thing to return after an ankle sprain. Always compare both sides. **Part Two** of this stretch is to bring your foot up with your toes on the ground and the repeat the same prayer stretch. Hold each stretch for 30 seconds and repeat 3 times.

5. Advanced Balance Exercises (Single Leg Balance Reach – various surfaces) – This includes single leg balance reach with a side kick as shown in the second series before. Work up to doing this for one minute with eyes open, then eyes closed. Once able to complete three sets of this place a pillow underneath to challenge your balance even more.



6. Low Level Plyos – Jump rope – Start with jumping rope for `1 minute and then go to one leg (the good leg first so you can see what type of ease you have) then go to the involved or bad leg and compare. This has to be symmetrical before you can progress to the next step.
7. Agility Drills – line drills and ladder – 15 minutes of any variety
8. Single Leg Hop Drills – Try hopping on one foot for 10-20 yards. No problem, hop slightly side to side for the same distance and compare side to side. If equal you are ready to sprint. If not then stay at this level
9. Sprinting and deceleration – consult your pre-season conditioning drills and see if you can do this
10. Change of Direction Drills – hard cuts, 20 yard shuttles, etc.
11. Return to practice and once able to go through complete practice with no adverse swelling or pain then you can return to play. Keep working on the above 10 exercises until they are equal compared to the other side.

****Remember to:**

- 1) Always plan ahead for what you are going to eat
- 2) Obtain adequate amounts of protein
- 3) Work on your flexibility and
- 4) Supplement your diet with a fish oil and multivitamin

Let me know if I can help. Email me at architechsports@gmail.com

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