

# Ankle Fracture

## Body Part

Ankle Fracture

## Condition:

Ankle Fractures are common injuries that predominantly occur as a result of trauma. Whether from rolling your ankle or from direct impact such as being in a car accident. Fractures in the ankle can range from the less serious avulsion injuries (small pieces of bone that have been pulled off) to severe shattering-type breaks of the tibia, fibula or both.



## Symptoms:

Although often occurring simultaneously, fractured ankles are often mistaken for sprained ankles therefore early detection is important. Symptoms vary case by case and include:

- Pain at the site of the fracture.
- Significant swelling.
- Bruising that develops soon after the injury.
- Inability to walk.
  - Note - it is possible to walk with some fractures
- Change in the appearance of the ankle
  - In comparison the opposite
- Bone protruding through the skin
  - A sign that immediate care is required due to the high infection risk

## Treatment:

If you think you have broken your ankle it is important to have it evaluated by a health professional ASAP. In the meantime you will need to apply the RICER principals.

- Rest:
  - Stay off the injured ankle via crutches or if you have moon boot.
- Ice:
  - On and off for 20 minutes at time
- Compression:
  - Via a compression stocking or bandaging.
- Elevation:
  - The ankle should be raised slightly above the level of your heart to reduce swelling.
- Referral
  - As mentioned before seek professional help asap

Treatment depends on the severity of the ankle fracture. Our clinicians at Gen Health will assess the injury and deem whether imaging is necessary e.g. X - ray or MRI. Complicated fractures will need surgery thus further referral will be necessary. Less complicated fractures may respond well to conservative treatment, which involves:

- Immobilisation of the fracture to allow it to heal
  - Moon boot
  - Crutches
  - Casting
- Pain management
  - Analgesics
  - Anti-inflammatories
  - Icing
- Compression
  - Reduces swelling and aids in healing

If tolerable, gentle range of motion exercises might be prescribed during the healing process to aid in maintaining range of motion. This is up to the clinician's discretion however.

Once healed a specifically tailored rehabilitation program will be prescribed by the clinician to potentially restore a pre-injury level of function. This program might include:

- Physical therapy
  - Massage
  - Mobilisations
  - Dry needling
- Bracing
  - Compression
  - Taping
  - Footwear modifications/updates
  - Unstable footwear could lead to reoccurring injury
- Orthotics
  - To correct any biomechanical problems

- Specific exercises
  - Theraband exercises
  - Body weight exercises
  - Stretching exercises
  - Balance exercises
- Medication
  - If pain persists analgesics or anti-inflammatories could still be utilised
- Return to exercise program
  - Once deemed fit, your health professional could develop a program to gradually return to physical activity.
- Ongoing supportive taping might be recommended in patients who return to sport for approximately 6-12 months. Particularly in patients with severe ankle sprains.

## Prognosis:

Fractures can take 6-12 weeks to heal depending on the severity of the fracture. Complicated cases where surgery is indicated will be closer to the latter end of the time frame and non-complicated fractures should heal quicker.

## Further information:

For further information, please contact our friendly team at Gen Health.

Picture Link: <https://www.floridafootankle.com/conditions/ankle-fracture/>