

## Ankle Sprains: It's Not As Simple As You Think

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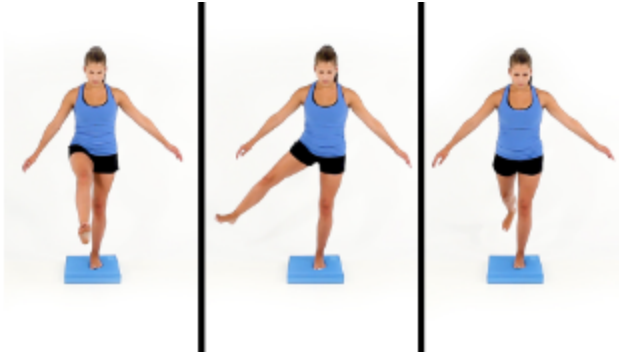
RICE! We've all heard it before. Rest, ice, compression, elevation. This is great immediate care for a sprained ankle, but most people neglect to take the *next steps* to prevent it from happening again. Ankle sprains are one of the most common musculoskeletal injuries and up to 70% of people who sustain an ankle sprain develop residual physical disabilities, including chronic ankle instability.

We all know someone, or maybe it's you, that has "rolled their ankle" several times. Why does that happen? The ankle is inherently a weak joint, supported by ligaments on either side of the joint. With chronic ankle sprains, these ligaments become weakened and don't support the ankle like needed, especially with quick, sudden movements and on uneven surfaces.



After someone sprains their ankle, it is important to restore full mobility, normalize their walking, and strengthen the leg! But it takes more than just exercise, and moving the ankle in a variety of ways.

The ankle needs to be challenged functionally in weight bearing positions, with a variety of forces. The ankle needs a chance to build up the sensory organs again after injury, which are the proprioceptors in the joint that tells our brain where our body is in space (is my ankle turned in, turned out, twisted, etc). After an ankle sprain, the proprioceptors are impaired, so we must challenge our ankle in certain ways to regain this sense of balance again.



Ankle strength, mobility, balance and neuromuscular control will allow us to fully restore the function of the ankle and prevent the ankle from injury in the future. Be sure to check in with your Physical Therapist after an injury to maximize your return to function and prevent further injury and disability.