

Ankle Anatomy

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The ankle joint is composed of three bones: the tibia, fibula and talus, and three ligamentous complexes that join the bones together: lateral, medial and syndesmotic. The ankle, along with the joints in the foot, allow for both up and down and side to side foot motion. Injuries to the ligaments are called sprains and are very common around the ankle. Fractures also occur frequently about the ankle.

Ankle Sprains

The ankle is one of the most commonly sprained joints. The most common ankle sprain is a lateral ankle sprain, which occurs when the sole of the foot turns inward, resulting in stretching or tearing of ligaments on the outside of the ankle. Another type is the high ankle sprain, which is more common in high velocity contact collision sports like football and hockey. This is an injury to the ligaments that connect the tibia and fibula, the two bones in the lower leg.

Common symptoms include pain, swelling, and sometimes difficulty putting weight on the affected leg. Ankle sprains are graded 1 through 3, with 3 being most severe. Your doctor will determine if x-rays of the ankle are required based on the severity of the symptoms.

Ankle sprains are treated with rest, ice, elevation, anti-inflammatory medications, physiotherapy, activity and exercise progression back to full weight bearing as tolerated, and often taping or protective bracing once the patient is ready to return to sports.