

# PREVENTING ANKLE SPRAINS IN THE WORKPLACE

**Our feet are our main mode of transport, carrying us on a journey of 128,000 kilometres in a lifetime – a distance equivalent to three times around the world. Ankle joints and feet are the link between your body and the ground. The tips below are to help you move well, stay well and assist in reducing the risk and severity of ankle sprains in the workplace.**

## FOOTWEAR

- With every step, shock is absorbed by the feet, knees, hips and spine to decrease the force of impact. Wearing the correct footwear will reduce these forces further whilst not affecting the normal function of the foot.
- Wearing the right footwear for the job protects you from stress-related injury to the ankles, knees, hips and spine.
- Wear activity-specific, well-fitting shoes, use sports strapping tape or an ankle brace to provide good ankle joint support (see your physiotherapist for advice on the correct support).

## SURFACES

- Avoid activities on slippery or uneven surfaces and in areas with poor lighting.

## EXERCISE

- Keep your leg muscles strong, especially your calf and ankle muscles to help protect the ligaments.
- Practise standing on one leg to challenge your balance responses and the muscles around your ankle.
- Simple exercise such as walking or swimming is the best.
- Before and after exercise, make sure you warm up and cool down with gentle stretches.



## WHAT TO DO AFTER A SPRAIN?

**As soon as possible, and for 72 hours after injury, use the RICE method:**

### **Rest**

Take it easy and only move within your limit of pain.

### **Ice**

As soon as possible, and for 20 minutes every two hours, apply ice or a frozen gel pack wrapped in a damp towel. This helps to control bleeding and pain whilst reducing secondary tissue damage.

### **Compression**

Firmly bandage the entire ankle and lower shin. This helps to control swelling.

### **Elevation**

As much as possible, elevate your ankle higher than the level of your heart to reduce swelling.

## HOW CAN PHYSIOTHERAPY HELP?

Your physiotherapist can help you prevent injury occurring. If you do become injured your physiotherapist will examine the injured ankle to determine the best course of treatment.

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