

Lateral ankle sprain

Recovery from a lateral ankle sprain is broken up into 4 phases. All phases need to be completed to return to sports or activities. The phases of these program can take variable times depending on how much time it takes to graduate from each phase. This is often depending on the severity of the injury, the past history of previous sprains, motivation of the patient, and the sport they need to return to. It will generally take from 3-12 weeks.

The stepwise approach starts by regaining full range of motion, then strength, and finally balance and proprioception.

With respect to ankle sprains, it is simply not enough to get rid of pain and swelling. At the midway point of the 3rd phase or in the early 4th phase when a patient are comfortable and swelling is gone that they are most subject to recurrence of another sprain. After the pain and swelling is gone, it is proprioception that need to be the focus. Proprioception is awareness of the position and movement of the body. When range of motion, strength and proprioception are is back to normal reoccurrence of injury is less likely to recur.

Phase 1 (for weightbearing restriction only)

Goals to move to the next phase:

- Full ankle range of motion.
- Pain is well controlled.
- Weightbearing restrictions have been removed by physician.

The 1st phase includes rest, immobilization, protecting the ankle for further damage, reducing the swelling, and controlling the pain. Usually, a short term of approximately 1 week in a boot with pain guided weightbearing and some early controlled mobilization often facilitate a better recovery. If a grade 3 sprain is suspected then often 10-14 days of non weightbearing in a walking boot is recommended.

Ankle Inversion

Sets: 2 | Reps: 15 | Frequency: 2 x per day

Execution:

- Bend your ankles inwards
- Relax your foot back to the start position in a controlled manner



Bend ankles inward

Ankle Plantarflexion

Sets: 2 | Reps: 15 | Frequency: 2 x per day

Execution:

- Bend your ankles downward



Bend ankles up



Bend ankles down

Ankle Eversion

Sets: 2 | Reps: 15 | Frequency: 2 x per day

Execution:

- Bend your ankles outward
- Relax your foot back to the start position in a controlled manner



Bend ankles outward

Assisted Dorsiflexion (Belt)

Sets: 2 | Reps: 15 | Frequency: 2 x per day

Preparation:

- Sit with your legs out in front
- Loop a belt or towel around the underside of your foot as shown

Execution:

- Bend your ankle, bringing your foot towards you
- Use the belt or towel to help with the motion



Loop belt around foot

Bend your ankle, bringing your foot towards you - Use the belt or towel to help with the motion

Phase 2

Goals to move to the next phase:

- Pain is well controlled.
- Walking without a limp

Ankle Plantar Flexion Concentric (Band)

Sets: 2 | Reps: 15 | Frequency: 1 x per day

Preparation:

- Sit with your leg straight in front of you, elastic band around your foot

Execution:

- Point your toes away from you against the resistance



Loop tubing/band around foot



Point toes against resistance

Ankle Eversion Eccentric (Band)

Sets: 2 | Reps: 15 | Frequency: 1 x per day

Preparation:

- Sit with your leg straight in front of you
- Turn your ankle outwards against the resistance

Execution:

- SLOWLY relax your ankle, letting your foot return inwards
- Turn your ankle back outwards against the resistance, returning to the start position



Start Position



Slowly relax ankle, fighting the resistance

Ankle Inversion Eccentric (Band)

Sets: 2 | Reps: 15 | Frequency: 1 x per day

Preparation:

- Sit with your leg straight in front of you
- Turn your ankle inwards

Execution:

- SLOWLY relax your ankle, letting the resistance pull your foot outwards in a controlled manner
- Turn your ankle back inwards against the resistance, returning to the start position



Start position



Slowly relax ankle, fighting the resistance



Single Leg Balance - Hands on Hips

Sets: 2 | Duration: 30 seconds | Frequency: 2 x daily

Preparation:

- Stand next to a wall, counter or chair if needed

Execution:

- Stand on one leg



Balance on one leg

Gastrocs Stretch (Wall)

Sets: 2 | Reps: 1 | Hold: 20 seconds | Frequency: Multiple x per day

Preparation:

- Stand in front of a wall with one leg forward and one leg back

Execution:

- Keeping your back leg straight and heel on ground, lean forward bending your front knee



Eyes and head forward, hands relaxed on wall, belly button pulled in



Bend elbows to move closer to the wall to stretch the back leg, keep front knee behind toes

Soleus Stretch (Wall)

Sets: 2 | Reps: 1 | Hold: 20 seconds | Frequency: Multiple x per day

Preparation:

- Stand in front of a wall with one leg forward and one leg back as shown

Execution:

- With the back leg bent, sit back onto your back foot, keeping your heel on the ground



Drop back knee toward ground

Phase 3

Goals to move to the next phase:

- Ability to jog with little to no pain.
- Full strength of the affected ankle compared to the unaffected ankle.

Airplane | A Frame

Sets: 2 | Reps: 1 | Duration: 30 seconds | Frequency: 2 x per day

Preparation:

- Stand with good posture in an "A" stance as shown

Execution:

- Bend at the hip reaching leg straight back
- Keep the back leg and spine straight



Stand tall



A frame



Reach straight back for Airplane



A frame



Back leg is straight and in line with body

Side Jumps Over a Line

Sets: 2 | Reps: 15 | Frequency: 1 x per day

Execution:

- Flex knees and hips, jump sideways over a line
- Immediately jump back



Flex hips and knees



Jump over line



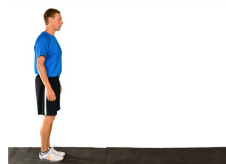
Immediately jump back

Lunge Walk

Sets: 2 | Reps: 15 | Frequency: 1 x per day

Execution:

- Take a big step forward
- Drop the back knee toward the ground
- Pull yourself forward using the front leg
- Repeat, alternating legs



Start position



Lunge



Repeat

Single Leg Balance (Foam)

Sets: 2 | Duration: 30 seconds | Frequency: 2 x daily

Execution:

- Balance on foam



Balance on foam



Hands on hips

Calf Raise Concentric | Single Leg (Chair)

Sets: 2 | Reps: 15 | Frequency: 2 x per day

Preparation:

- Stand holding a chair as shown
- Stand on one foot

Execution:

- Stand on your tip toes, lifting your heel as high as you can



Start Position



Stand on tip toes

Phase 4

Goals to move to return to sports or full activity:

- Work towards full proprioception and balance
- Pass the lateral hop test, single leg stance, heel rocker test.
- Ability to cut and pivot without pain or hesitation

Walking without a limp, jogging straight ahead without pain, and progressing to weaving and cutting laterally in addition to hopping and jumping on the affected ankle-in all directions.

The next phase includes functional rehabilitation using a controlled range of motion, strength, and flexibility to minimize the swelling.

Exercises are designed to improve strength, balance and proprioception. This is 1 sport specific activities that require sharp, sudden, twisting, ballistic activities can be resumed. This is what can restore confidence in the ankle-not until this visit and completed that athlete can return to sport. A functional brace such as an ASO lace up with straps is helpful until confidence is restored.

Squat Jump (Box)

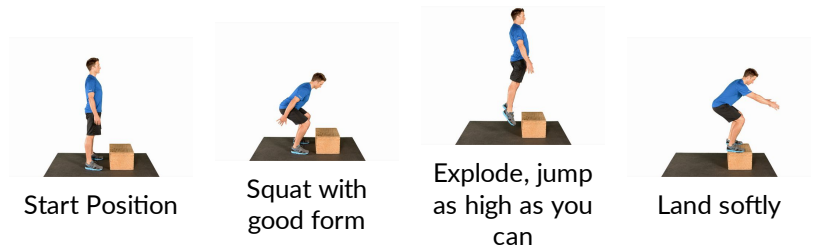
Sets: 2 | Reps: 15 | Frequency: 1 x per day

Preparation:

- Start in a squat position

Execution:

- Explode from the hip jumping up into the air from both legs
- Land on box softly, absorbing the shock with triple flexion (hips, knees, ankles)
- Step off box and repeat



Drop Squat (Box or Step)

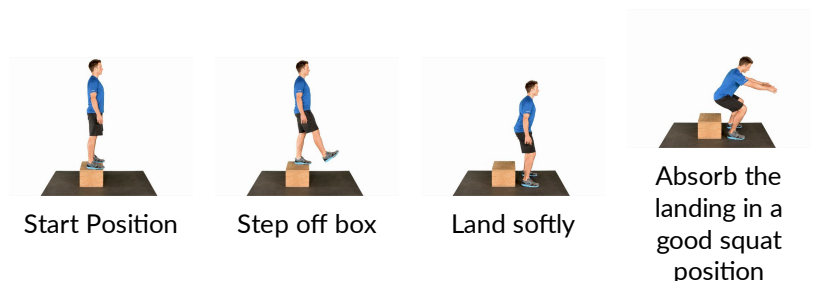
Sets: 2 | Reps: 15 | Frequency: 1 x per day

Preparation:

- Start on top of box or step as shown

Execution:

- Step off of box or step
- Land on the floor softly, absorbing the shock with triple flexion (hips, knees, ankles)
- Step back onto box and repeat



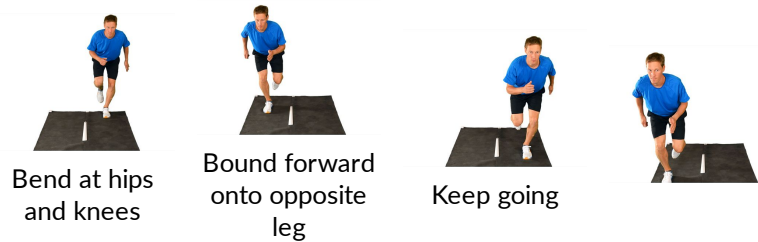


Bounding

Sets: 2 | Reps: 15 | Frequency: 1 x per day

Execution:

- Bend at knees and hip, propel yourself forward onto the opposite leg
- Immediately jump forward onto other foot
- Continue forward



Lateral Tuck Jump

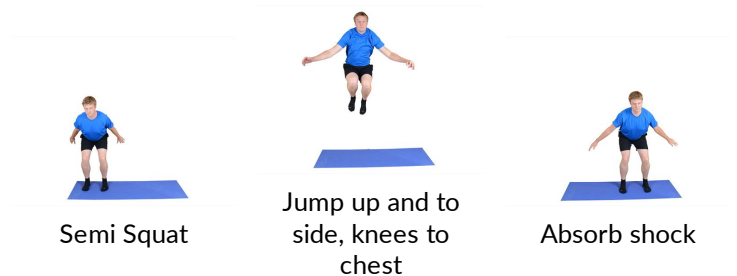
Sets: 2 | Reps: 15 | Frequency: 1 x per day

Preparation:

- Start in a semi-squat position
- Engage your core

Execution:

- Jump up and to the side exploding from the hips
- Bring knees towards chest and parallel to the ground while in the air
- Land absorbing the shock with triple flexion (hips, knees, ankles)
- Hold the landing for 2 seconds
- Repeat jumping to the other side



Note:

- Knees to chest
- NOT chest to knees

Bound + Hold | Forward Single Leg

Sets: 2 | Reps: 15 | Frequency: 1 x per day

Preparation:

- Stand balancing on one foot

Execution:

- Take a medium hop forward
- Land and stick on the same leg (jumping leg)
- Balance for 2 seconds
- Repeat

