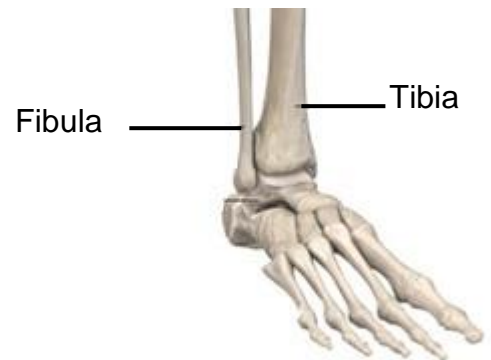


# Self Help for Ankle Fracture

## Information for patients

### What is an ankle fracture?

An ankle fracture is an injury that occurs when you break or crack one or both of the bones (fibula and tibia) in the ankle.



### What are the symptoms?

Pain, swelling and bruising may occur in the ankle following injury to the bones. You may also struggle with walking / weight bearing. In some cases the ankle can look deformed or 'out of place'. These symptoms can often be similar to an ankle sprain.

### What is the recovery time?

You are likely to have a good recovery following an ankle fracture. The bones usually heal in six to eight weeks but may take longer if you are smoke or have diabetes.




### What is the best management plan?

To determine whether you have a fracture an x-ray will be taken.

The type of ankle fracture will depend on the early management. If the fracture is stable and in a good position it can be treated with a plaster cast or a removable specialised boot. Weight bearing will be allowed if the fracture is stable but will be determined by the orthopaedic doctor in charge of your care.

If the fracture is unstable or displaced surgery may be required to stabilise the bones. The orthopaedic surgeon will use a plate or screws to hold the bones in place. Weight bearing will be determined after the operation.

- **Elevation** – When resting, elevate your foot higher than your heart with the leg supported.
- **Pain relief** - You may take as prescribed or as discussed with a pharmacist or your doctor as it is important to manage pain early on after your injury.
- **Exercises** - Complete exercise 1 and 2 (on page 2) as soon as you are able. Move on to exercise 3, 4 and 5 (pages 2 and 3) when you are able to weight bear.

Diagram	Explanation
	<p><b>Exercise 1</b></p> <p>Lying on your back or sitting, raise your foot off the floor.</p> <p>Bend and straighten your ankles briskly. Keep your knees straight during the exercise to allow your calf muscles to stretch.</p> <p>Repeat 10 times, three to five times each day.</p>
	<p><b>Exercise 2</b></p> <p>Lying on your back or sitting, raise your foot off the floor.</p> <p>Rotate your ankle. Change directions.</p> <p>Repeat 10 times, three to five times each day.</p>
	<p><b>Exercise 3</b></p> <p>Stand in a walking position with the leg to be stretched straight behind you and the other leg bent in front of you. Take support from a wall or chair.</p> <p>Lean your body forwards and down until you feel the stretching in the calf of the straight leg.</p> <p>Hold for 20 seconds.</p> <p>Repeat five times, three times each day.</p>

When your ankle is more settled try exercises 4 and 5.



#### Exercise 4

Push up on your toes. You may need to hold on to a table / chair or worktop for support.

Repeat 10 times, two to three times each day as tolerated.



#### Exercise 5

Stand on your injured leg with no support.

Try to increase the time you can balance. Draw the alphabet three times with your other foot to make this exercise more difficult.

Repeat two to three times each day as tolerated.

Progress to doing this exercise standing on a cushion or rolled up towel.

Repeat two to three times each day as tolerated.

Pain during exercise  
0 = no pain    10 = worse pain imaginable

<p><b>0 – 3</b> <b>Safe Zone</b></p>	<p><b>4 – 5</b> <b>Acceptable</b></p>	<p><b>5 – 10</b> <b>Excessive</b></p>
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If your pain is above 5, reduce the amount of time you spend doing each exercise. If pain still persists and does not settle, contact a Healthcare Professional.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### When can I drive?

Please make sure your boot or plaster cast has been removed before driving. You are able to drive when you can safely perform an emergency stop and it is your decision as to when you feel ready to do this. It is good practice to inform your insurance company of the injury.

### When can I return to physical exercise?

You may return to physical exercise when you can safely perform the actions which are appropriate to your exercise. Examples of this include walking, running, jumping and changing direction comfortably.

### What do I do if my ankle does not settle?

If your symptoms do not improve after your plaster cast or boot has been removed and you have followed the advice in this leaflet, please complete a physiotherapy self-referral form from your local GP reception desk.

This information is available in audio, Braille, large print and other languages.  
To request a copy, please ask a member of staff.