

PSI Evidence-Based Newsletter

The **only** physiotherapy clinics in Ottawa **accredited** by the Canadian Physiotherapy Association for excellence in service.

Ankle Pain – The Facts

- Ankle sprains account for 10% of all emergency room visits and 25% of all sports injuries.
- 55% of people who experience an ankle sprain will not seek professional treatment.
- 25-40% of ankle sprains will result in recurrent injury or chronic disability such as pain, swelling or instability.
- Up to 80% of athletes with ankle sprains will suffer chronic ankle instability.

What is an ankle sprain?

First degree ankle sprain:

- Some stretching or mild tearing of the ligament
- Little or no functional loss; able to weight-bear with discomfort.
- Mild pain with some swelling and stiffness.

Second degree ankle sprain:

- More severe tearing of the ligaments
- Moderate instability of the joint
- Moderate to severe pain, weight-bearing is very painful
- Significant swelling, stiffness and bruising.

Third degree ankle sprain:

- Total rupture of a ligament; there is a loss of motion
- Gross instability of the joint
- Severe pain initially followed by no pain
- Severe swelling

Ottawa Ankle Rules: x-ray required only if there is pain on palpation on the distal 6cm of the posterior edge of the fibular or tibia and tip of the malleolus and an inability to walk 4 steps.

Physiotherapy helps!

- Early treatment will help prevent chronic pain and long-term instability.
- R.I.C.E : Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation should be done for all ankle sprains.
- Acupuncture, ultrasound and interferential are used to decrease swelling and pain.
- Proprioceptive exercises are a key part of rehabilitation of ankle sprains.
- Range of motion, flexibility, balance and strength exercises are given.
- Research shows mobilization of the ankle joint leads to a quicker increase in pain-free dorsiflexion.
- Hip muscle activation is significantly delayed in people after severe ankle sprains. Compromised stability could lead to increased wear and tear at the hip in later years.
- Physiotherapists can teach your patient how to do special ankle taping or fit them with an ankle brace, protecting the ankle from further injury.

Manual Therapy and Ankle Sprains: Restoring Function & Reducing Re-Injury. *SomaticSenses.com Newsletter – June 2007.*

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Why use PSI Physiotherapy and Sports Injury Centres?

- ✓ We improve level of function, ability to work, and quality of life
- ✓ We aim for long-term results not just short-term pain relief.
- ✓ We focus on functional outcomes.

PSI Ottawa

2571 Carling Ave., Suite 310
Ottawa, ON K2B 7H7
Tel: (613) 596-0167
Fax: (613) 596-4281

PSI Kanata

99 Kakulu Rd., Suite 106
Kanata, ON K2L 3C8
Tel: (613) 591-8832
Fax: (613) 591-0170

PSI Sport Medicine West

1000 Palladium Dr, Box 103
Kanata, ON K2V 1A4
Tel: (613) 599-0299
Fax: (613) 599-0298

PSI Nepean

1 Centrepointe Dr., Suite 310
Nepean, ON K2G 6E2
Tel: (613) 723-6161
Fax: (613) 723-9090

PSI Women's Health

152 Cleopatra Dr, Suite 108
Nepean, ON K2G 5X2
Tel: (613) 727-5557
Fax: (613) 727-2755