

Ask the Professional – Ankle Sprains

One of the most common injuries that occur in sports are inversion ankle sprains, meaning a sprain to the outside of the ankle. Inversion ankle injuries are 90% more likely to happen than an eversion ankle sprain (a sprain to the inside of the ankle), or a high ankle sprain (above the ankle joint itself). A sprain is an injury that affects the ligaments (the structures that help to support a joint and span from bone to bone) and are typically graded 1 through 3, with 1 being the least severe. An inversion ankle injury affects the ligaments on the outside or lateral part of the ankle underneath the ankle bone (called the malleolus). The 3 ligaments from front to back are the anterior talofibular ligament (ATFL), the calcaneal fibular ligament (CFL) and the posterior talofibular ligament (PTFL). Typically the more severe the sprain the further back the ligaments will be affected, thus a 1st degree ankle sprain typically only affects the ATFL. Following injury to any joint, especially weight bearing joints like the ankle, it is important to pursue examination by a health care professional in order to determine the severity of the sprain, if there are any concurrent fractures and a course of treatment. Standard first aid practices are applicable (RICE – rest, ice, compression and elevation) and an early rehabilitation program which can help to restore normal range of movement, strength and balance are vital to return to pre injury status. Balance training is one of the most important portions of the rehab process and often one of the most neglected. It is especially important for people who participate in sports, regardless of the level, to adhere to their rehabilitation guidelines in order to help minimize the chance of re-injury. Due to the forces that typically go through weight bearing joints, especially when running or jumping, support such as ankle braces, sports taping or Kinesiotaping (look for more information on Kinesiotaping in next months article) may also be of benefit. One of the most detrimental decisions that can be made is returning to activity too early following an injury, especially when the area is not healed enough to withstand the stresses that can be put through the injured area. An acute (new or recent problem) can often become chronic or long standing when it is consistently re-injured. Ensuring that the proper footwear is utilized for whatever type of activity is being performed is also very important in order to minimize the risk of injury as much as possible.

For more information on this topic, please contact

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