

Ankle Fracture Exercises

Reference Number: ULHT-LFT-4076 v1

Issued: June 2025

Review Date: June 2027

What is an ankle fracture?

Your ankle consists of three bones in your lower leg that join to your foot; these are called the Tibia, Fibula and Talus. It is possible to have a break in any of these three bones, usually determined after an X-ray and medical examination by a professional. A broken Talus is treated differently to that of a Tibia or Fibula fracture.

Common symptoms

- Pain immediately after injury, usually throbbing
- Swelling around the area for a few weeks
- Unable to weight bear
- You may have some deformity at injury site
- Bruising
- Tenderness to touch

Treatment

- You will be placed in a cast or given a boot depending on site or level of injury, determined by a health professional. This will need to be worn for 6 weeks to allow for the injury to heal
- You will most likely be non-weight bearing to protect the injury as it heals
- You will require elbow crutches or a frame to help take the weight off your ankle and ensure safe mobility

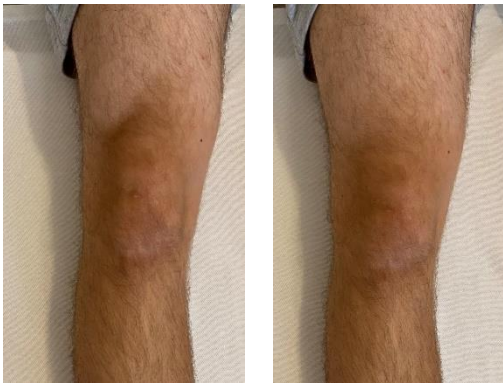
Going up and down stairs

Upstairs - Hold the banister with one hand and use one crutch on the opposite side. Holding the handrail, keep the crutch on the same step. Push through the crutch and step up with your good leg. Finish by bringing your crutch up to the same step.

Downstairs - Put your injured leg out in front of you, with no weight through it, whilst you put the crutch down on the next step down. Lean your weight through the crutch and handrail whilst you step down with the uninjured leg.

Self-treatment at home

- Rest and elevate ankle as much as possible to reduce swelling and try to reduce the amount of time on feet. You may take some pain relieving medications as prescribed or instructed on the packaging
- There are exercises that can be completed whilst in cast for first 6 weeks. This is to help maintain movement in your knee and circulation to your foot. These are to be completed 4 times per day
- Move toes as much as cast allows
- Bend and straighten knee
- Squeeze buttocks together
- Lie on bed, straighten leg and push knee into bed (without using your hand)



What to do after the cast is taken off? (usually after 6 weeks)

- Bathe ankle in warm water for approximately 10 minutes and then dry the area and apply moisturiser to help soften the skin
- If you have had surgery, you need to massage the moisturiser cream into tissue as well as the scar, to ensure correct tissue healing
- Aim to reduce use of crutches as you feel confident but always make sure that you are safe to do so. The best way to do this is to go from two elbow crutches to one (crutch in opposite hand to injured leg) and then to zero. When mobilising aim to walk heel toe
- You will then be referred to see a local Physiotherapist that will be able to further advise and educate you on the best exercises to help you get back to normal daily activities in the long term

Exercises post cast

- Point toes towards you and hold for 10 seconds



- Point toes away from you and hold for 10 seconds



- Point toes into the middle and hold for 10 seconds



- Point toes out to the side and hold for 10 seconds



- Go onto your toes and bring your heels into the air. You could attempt a supported single leg calf raise as you feel confident



- As you feel confident, you can progress to support single leg standing



Frequently asked questions

- Repeat the exercises as your pain allows throughout the day
- Full healing is approximately 6 to 12 weeks, but it may take several months to return to full, normal activity depending on lifestyle
- You can drive once the cast is off at 6 weeks and you can start to put a bit of weight through your ankle. It may be advisable to practice completing an emergency stop in a quiet area before determining whether you are safe to return to driving
- Weight bearing too soon can cause the ankle to heal in a bad position or to not heal at all. This can also lead to future conditions such as arthritis. Both may require surgery to fix

Any further questions, please contact your local site Physiotherapy department.

Physiotherapy Departments

County Hospital Louth: 01507 631234

Grantham District Hospital: 01476 464253

Lincoln County Hospital: 01522 573945

Pilgrim Hospital Boston: 01205 445494

Johnson Community Hospital Spalding: 01775 652204

Skegness and District Hospital: 01754 613516

United Lincolnshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is accurate and impartial.

If you require this information in another language or alternative format, please email the Patient Information team at ulth.patient.information@nhs.net