

CAUSES

- An **injury** to one or more **ligaments** in the ankle when the **foot rolls, turns** or **twists** in an awkward direction, resulting in **stretching** or **tearing** of the ligaments.
- Ligament injury most **commonly occurs** in sports requiring **change of direction, landing** and **uneven surfaces**. Ligament injury can also result from a contact injury, in which an object forces the foot into an end range position.
- Damage most **commonly occurs** to the **lateral ligaments** (outside of the ankle), when the ankle rolls out.
- The **most common risk factor** for an ankle sprain is **previous history of ankle sprain**.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- **Pain** in the lateral or medial **side** of the **ankle**.
- **Bruising** and **swelling** of the ankle and foot.
- **Tenderness** to **touch**.
- Feelings of **instability**.
- **Difficulty weightbearing** through affected leg.



WHAT ELSE COULD IT BE?

- Fracture
- Ankle Impingement
- Ankle Syndesmosis Injury
- Peroneal Tendinopathy

ASSESSMENT & OUTCOME MEASURES

- Subjective examination addressing **mechanism of injury**, aggravating positions and 24hr pain.
- Assessment of **ability to weight bear, ankle range of motion, ligament tests** and **palpation** of the bones and ligaments to rule out need for further imaging.
- Assessment of **balance, lower limb strength** and **control**.
- Assessment of sporting footwear.

MANAGEMENT

- **Period of relative rest** from sport +/- immobilisation in a moon boot/crutches/taping dependent on extent of injury (referral for imaging if fracture is suspected &/or Sports Physician if warranted).
- If applicable manual therapy to improve ankle range of motion, reduce pain and increase function.
- Graduated exercise **rehabilitation** program consisting of **range of motion, strengthening** and **balance** exercises for the ankle and lower limb.
- **Education** regarding **return to activity** and load management as injury rehabilitation progresses.

Doherty C., Delahunt E., Caulfield B., Hertel J., Ryan J., Bleakley C. (2014). The incidence and prevalence of ankle sprain injury: a systematic review and meta-analysis of prospective epidemiological studies. *Sports Medicine*; 44: 123-140.

McGovern R.P., Martin R.L. (2016). Managing ankle ligament sprains and tears: current opinion. *Open Access Journal of Sports Medicine*; 7: 33-42.