



DON'T STRAIN YOUR BRAIN WHEN CARING FOR AN

# ANKLE SPRAIN

**ABOUT 28,000**  
ANKLE INJURIES  
occur in the United States each day.

**IT'S BELIEVED 45%**  
OF ALL ATHLETIC INJURIES  
ARE ANKLE SPRAINS,  
making it the most common sports injury.

- Field hockey has the highest rate of ankle injuries and sprains, followed by volleyball, football, basketball, cheerleading, ice hockey, lacrosse, soccer, rugby, track and field, gymnastics and softball.
- An ankle sprain occurs when there is a tear in the ligament, while an ankle strain occurs when there is a tear in the muscle.
- Ankle sprains are graded on severity and range from grade 1 (mild; no significant structural injury) to grade 3 (severe; complete rupture of the ligamentous structures).
- After an ankle is sprained, it has a greater chance of becoming sprained again. Repeating ankle sprains put an individual at risk for ankle osteoarthritis.

## KNOWING THE PHASES

**ACUTE PHASE:** Usually the first two weeks of injury. The ankle will have pain, heat, swelling, redness and/or bruising and loss of function.

**SUBACUTE PHASE:** After the first two weeks of injury. During this phase, the body begins to heal the damaged tissues of the ankle. By now, the ankle should have regained its range of motion, and should begin to improve in balance and strength.

## TREATMENT OPTIONS

**R**

REST

**I**

ICE

**C**

COMPRESSION

**E**

ELEVATION

Not all ankle sprains are alike, so be sure to consult a health care provider, such as an athletic trainer or physician, for an individualized treatment plan.

## HOW TO PREVENT AN ANKLE SPRAIN

**1**

Have a prevention program created by an athletic trainer or qualified medical provider that focuses on ankle strength, balance and motor control for a minimum of three months. This is best for someone who has already sprained their ankle.

**3**

Tape or brace ankles during sport activities, such as games and practices. Athletes with previous ankle sprains who wore a brace or tape following injury had approximately 70 percent fewer ankle injuries than athletes who did not.

**2**

Participate in a lower body strength training program.

**4**

Consider your footwear—high-top shoes offer more ankle support than low-top shoes.