

Treatment of Ankle Sprains

For most ankle strains you can use the **PRINCE** treatment:

Protection – use a protective brace such as a brace with a built in air cushion.

Rest – avoid walking on a painful ankle or foot. Use crutches until you can walk without pain.

Ice – Apply ice for at least the first 24 –72 hours or until the swelling goes down. Apply the ice pack for 10-20 minutes every hour or two during the day. Make an ice pack from a plastic bag filled with frozen peas or corn.

NSAIDs or acetaminophen – NSAIDs like motrin, advil, or aleve will reduce pain and swelling. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) will reduce pain.

Compression – an ace wrap or elastic sleeve will help reduce swelling over the first 24 – 48 hours

Elevation – raise your ankle above your heart for at least 2-3 hours per day. The more you can keep the foot and ankle elevated the less swelling and bruising you will have.

Proper treatment and rehabilitation exercises are important for ankle sprains. If the ankle does not heal right, it may become weak and unstable and painful. If the ankle is weak it may become reinjured easily and compound the damage already done. Before you return to sports or other activities that stress your ankle, make sure you can walk and hop on it without pain. Taping your ankle or wearing a brace, hiking boots, or high top lace up shoes may also help protect your ankle.