

Ankle Fractures

Information for Patients



This leaflet has been written to give you the right information about ankle fractures and what you can do to help with your recovery.

What is an ankle fracture?

Firstly, a fracture is the same as a break. The word fracture is a medical term and a break is more of a common term to describe an injury to a bone that has caused it to break.

There are many different types of fractures, but they all essentially mean the same thing i.e. that one or more of the bones in your ankle have been broken.

What can I expect after an ankle fracture?

Pain: Ankle fractures can potentially be really quite sore. Sometimes they can be very sore and sometimes they may only hurt a little, but it is very normal for that soreness to still be there for some time afterwards (weeks possibly into months).

Swelling: After an ankle fracture, it is very likely for you to notice swelling. It is normal to find the swelling lasts for a long time (possibly into months) and it may even still be there when the pain has settled and you are feeling better. This doesn't necessarily mean anything is wrong, it is just what seems to happen.

Stiffness: Whilst your ankle is sore and swollen, you can expect to find that moving it may be difficult. Again, this is normal and actually will help the early stages of your healing. Once you are ready, it is important to get your ankle moving as soon as you feel that you can, as this will make sure your recovery is started nice and early.

When will my ankle be healed?

Fractures typically heal within about 6-8 weeks. There are things that might influence this, including any pre-existing health conditions such as diabetes or if you smoke, but typically once you pass the 6-8 weeks timescale, you can consider your ankle to be healed.

What can I do to help myself?

Trust it: After an ankle fracture, you might not feel confident to use your it or may feel that it will let you down or that you might injure it again. This is extremely normal and might take a little while to improve. It is hoped that the information on this page will help you understand what is normal after a fracture and help you to start to trust your leg again.

Start using it: Your leg is designed to be used, therefore it is important to try and get it going as soon as you can (in some cases this has to be once the hospital has said they are happy for you to do so). If you have been told you are able to take some weight on your foot, you should look to start this as soon as you are able to. It is likely to be sore, awkward and potentially difficult but you will not make it worse by using it. You may need to adjust how you use your arm or how long you do things for in the first stages, but it is something that improves over time for most people.

Will it get better?

For most people, an ankle fracture will not be a pleasant experience but reassuringly, it does have the potential to get better. It is difficult to predict how long or how smooth or how full your recovery might be, but by understanding the issue as best you can and by adjusting what is sore to then allow you to explore some exercise/s, is often the best formula for success.

If you would like to know more about ankle fractures or find a greater choice of exercises, you can explore our dedicated webpage.

Search online: [Norfolk and Waveney MSK services](#) 'ankle fractures'

Exercises



Sitting with a scarf or band around your foot. Pull your toes up towards you and pull on the ends of the scarf/band to increase this stretch.

Complete little and often throughout the day.



Sitting with a scarf or band around your foot. Cross the end of the scarf/band over in your hand. Turn your foot outwards or inwards and pull on the end of the scarf/band that increases this movement.

Complete little and often throughout the day.



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