

4 steps to Ankle Injury Recovery

1: Range of Motion

Range of motion stretches can be passive or active. Moving your foot with an assisting device, like a towel, is passive range of motion. Moving your foot without assistance is active range of motion. Start your exercises with passive range of motion.

Passive Range of Motion



Towel stretch

- Sit on the floor with your legs straight out in front.
- Wrap a towel around the ball of your foot, holding the ends of the towel in each hand.
- Gently pull your toes towards your head.
- Hold the stretch for 30 seconds, then let your foot relax.
- Repeat the stretch three to five times.



Calf stretch - wall or stairs

- Stand facing a wall.
- Point your toes towards your head, and place the ball of your foot against the wall.
- Push your toes into the wall to feel a stretch in your calf muscle.
- If you want to feel the stretch lower in your calf, bend your knee as you push your toes into the wall.

Another option for this stretch is to use stairs

- Stand with toes on the edge of the step with your heel hanging off.
- Be sure to hold on to a railing to maintain balance.

Active Range of Motion



ABC exercise

- While sitting down, use your toes to write out the alphabet in the air.
- Motion comes from your ankle.
- Keep your lower leg still while doing this exercise.
- Perform multiple times with a one-minute break between each repetition.



B.A.P.S. board exercise

Biomechanical ankle platform system (B.A.P.S.) is used to improve balance in the ankle, knee and hip after injury or surgery

- With your foot resting on the B.A.P.S board, push the edges of the board to the floor at the positions of the clock, 12, 3, 6 and 9.
- You can also do this exercise by touching the edge of the board all the way around as you turn your ankle.
- Perform clockwise or counterclockwise.

2: Strength

Make sure to warm up prior to doing these exercises. A 5-10 minute walk is a good warmup. Several strength exercises require a stretch band, which can be found at any sporting goods store. All exercises should be done in three sets of 10 repetitions in a slow, controlled manner. Stretches, such as our range of motion exercises, should be done to prevent soreness after exercising.



Heel raises

- Start with your feet shoulder width apart. Hold a chair or brace yourself against a wall for balance.
- Lift your unaffected foot off the floor, shifting your weight onto the injured ankle.
- Raise your heel as high as you can, and slowly lower it back to the floor.



Toe taps

- While sitting in a chair, keep your heel on the ground, and flex your ankle.
- Lift your toes off the ground, then lower your foot.
- Repeat for 30 seconds and do three sets.



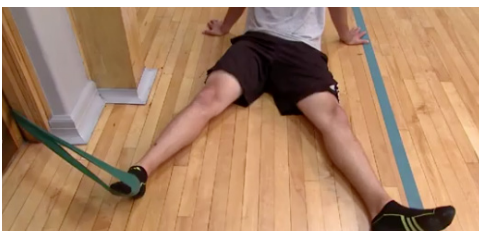
Resisted dorsiflexion

- Tie the band around a fixed object, then wrap it around the front of your foot.
- Pull the foot towards your body while keeping the knee straight, stretching the band.



Resisted plantar flexion

- Wrap the band around the ball of your foot, holding the ends of the band in your hands.
- Gently push your foot and toes down, stretching the band.



Inversion

- Tie the band around a fixed object, then wrap it around the front of your foot.
- Start with foot relaxed, then move your foot down and in, stretching the band.



Eversion

- Tie the band around a fixed object, then wrap it around the front of your foot.
- Start with foot relaxed, then move your foot up and out, stretching the band.

3: Balance

Make sure to warm up prior to doing these exercises. Riding a stationary bike or taking a 5-10 minute walk are good warmups. After exercising be sure to stretch to prevent soreness. Refer to the Range of Motion sheet or Stretch Exercise sheet.



One-foot balance

- Stand next to a counter or table for support, and raise your leg so your foot is off the ground.
- Start with your eyes open. Once it becomes easy, close your eyes and repeat.
- Try to touch the toes of your raised foot three times in 30 seconds of balancing.
- Repeat this exercise three times.

A great way to increase the difficulty is to add a pillow or foam pad to make balancing more challenging.



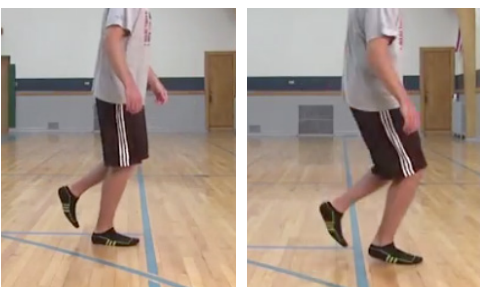
Balance on a B.A.P.S. board

- Start with balancing on the B.A.P.S. board with both feet.
- When that becomes easy, balance only on your injured leg.
- Closing your eyes while balancing can make it more difficult.



B.O.S.U. ball toss

- Stand on your injured leg, and have a friend lightly toss a ball while standing on a B.O.S.U. ball.
- To progress on this exercise, have the ball thrown a bit higher.



One-foot line hops

- Choose a line on the floor, and hop back and forth on your injured ankle.
- Hop for about 30 seconds, then take a break.
- Repeat multiple times.

4: Return to Play

Make sure to warm up prior to doing these exercises. After exercising be sure to stretch to prevent soreness. Once you are ready to get back to your sport, try the moves you would typically make. If you can handle these moves pain free, then you should be ready to return to play.



Straight-line running

- Start with stretches.
- Run between 30 and 50 yards or half a football field.
- Start with a jog at about 50 percent of your full running speed.
- If pain free, then add more speed. Increase the speed until you are at your full running speed.



45-degree cutting

- Create a zig-zag pattern while running.
- Start at 50 percent of your speed, and then gradually increase.
- You can also change the angle you turn to 90 degrees.

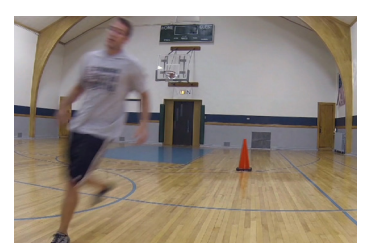


Figure 8 running

- Continuous running in the shape of an 8.
- Start slowly, and increase your speed as you go.
- Decrease the size of your 8 as you increase your speed.



Squat jumps

- Start in a low crouch, then jump upwards into a full jump.
- Start with a minimal squat, and increase the depth as you go.
- Reach your hands to the sky or interlock them on the back of your head to increase difficulty.