

# 8-STEP STRENGTHENING

## AFTER AN ANKLE INJURY



### STEP 1: Strengthen surrounding muscles

#### 1. TOWEL CRUNCHES

- Sit in chair with feet flat on the floor. Place a towel beneath your feet.
- Use the toes of your injured foot to crunch up the towel.
- When you reach the end, flatten the towel.
- Repeat 10 times with each foot. For extra resistance, add a weight to the end of the towel.

#### 2. MARBLE PICK-UP

- Spread marbles on towel below your feet.
- Use the toes of your injured foot to pick up the marbles, one at a time, placing them in a jar.
- Repeat the pickup 10 times with each foot.

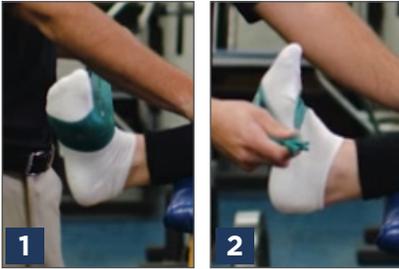


### STEP 2: Isometric exercises

- With the help of an athletic trainer or coach, contract the muscle without moving the joint.
  1. First, the trainer pushes the injured foot toward the outside of your body.
    - Resist for 10 seconds.
  2. Then, the trainer pushes the opposite direction, toward the inside of your body.
    - Resist for 10 seconds.
  3. Next, the trainer pulls the foot away from you.
    - Resist for 10 seconds.
  4. Finally, the trainer pushes the foot toward you.
    - Resist for 10 seconds.

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### STEP 3: Four-way band strengthening

#### 1. INVERSION

- Create tension on the inside of your injured foot.
- Rotate your ankle inward 10 times.

#### 2. EVERSION

- Create tension on the outside of your injured foot.
- Rotate your ankle outward 10 times.



#### 3. PLANTAR FLEXION

- Hold the band wrapped around the bottom of your injured foot to create tension.
- Point your toes down, away from you, 10 times.



#### 4. DORSIFLEXION

- Create tension with the band wrapped around the top of your injured foot.
- Point your toes up, toward your body, 10 times.



### STEP 4: Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation (PNF)

- In PNF stretching, a coach or athletic trainer guides your injured joint through two diagonals.

#### 1. Point your big toe down and away from your body. Then, up and out.

- Repeat 10 times.

#### 2. Turn the bottom of your foot - little toe first - to face down and away from your body. Then rotate it up and in.

- Repeat 10 times.



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## STEP 5: Body weight resistive exercises

### HEEL/TOE RAISES

- Progress through heel/toe variations as your ankle recovers.

#### 1. FIRST STAGES OF RECOVERY

- Stand with both feet on a flat surface and rock steadily from toes to heels.
- Use wall or table for support as needed.

#### 2. INTERMEDIATE STAGES OF RECOVERY

- After some time when stage 1 is easily attainable, perform the same motion on the injured foot only.

#### 3. ADVANCED STAGES OF RECOVERY

- Once you can accomplish the first two variations, use a slant board for two feet heel raises.

#### 4. NEARING FULL RECOVERY

- Perform the same motion on the injured foot only.



## STEP 6: Balance exercises

- Hold each of these balance exercises for 10 seconds.

#### 1. STATIC

- Balance weight on both feet.
- Once balancing on both feet is tolerable, balance with one foot in front of the other.
- Then try single-leg balancing on your injured ankle.

#### 2. DYNAMIC

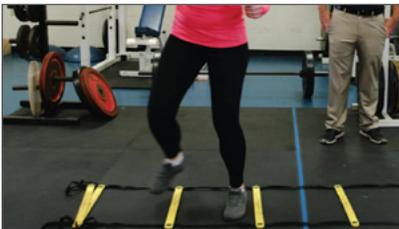
- Once successful with static exercises, change the surroundings and repeat this sequence on an aerox pad as you get closer to full recovery.

#### 3. SPORT SPECIFIC

- Put the movements together with ball-handling, or other sport-related movement.

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### STEP 7: Functional exercise

#### AGILITY LADDER

- Work with your coach or trainer to determine the best agility ladder exercises for your sport and injury.
- In this series, we suggest:
  - Run there and back with one foot in each slot.
  - Run there and back with two feet in each slot.
  - Hop with two feet there and back.
  - Side step with both feet there and back.



### STEP 8: Return to play

Once your injury is mostly healed, begin easier drills in practice. For example, a two-man basketball drill.

As easier drills become more tolerable, work with your coach and trainer to determine which of the more difficult drills you can work into as you fully recover.

### Looking for more?

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