

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 a physical therapist, contract the muscle without moving the joint.

1. First, the therapist pushes the injured foot toward the outside of your body.

- Resist for 10 seconds.



2. Then, the therapist pushes the opposite direction, toward the inside of your body.

- Resist for 10 seconds.

3. Next, the therapist pulls the foot away from you.

- Resist for 10 seconds.

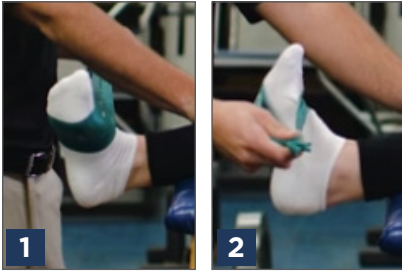


4. Finally, the therapist pushes the foot toward you.

- 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 physical therapist guides your injured joint through two diagonals.

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

- Resist for 10 seconds.

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

- Resist for 10 seconds.



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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 aerex 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 a physical therapist 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 a physical therapist to determine which of the more difficult drills you can work into as you fully recover.

Looking for more?

- Visit shine365.marshfieldclinic.org to learn more.
- To view more return-to-play strengthening videos, visit youtube.com/marshfieldclinic.