

Lateral Ankle Sprain - Phase 4 Rehab

Goal: Continue to improve strength and stability of the ankle AND transition into sports

What I know: I have a 300% increased risk of injury unless I am diligent with my rehab

What I need to do: Exercise therapy to decrease this risk of injury. Slow transition into running and jumping based activity to prepare for the rigors of sport.

I am fit for Phase 4 when: I can do single leg heel raises easily, walk without a limp, have a reasonable knee to wall and can jog (landing on flat foot or heel to toe) without pain.

I am fit to return to play when: I can cut, sprint, hop and jump.

I should not forget: to continue my previous exercises provided and make them my routine for the longer term.

You should now be feeling pretty good and ready to try harder activities. It is important to remember though that some form of ongoing instability may persist indefinitely. Continuing some form of strength and balance activity may help prevent injury in the long term. It is also certainly worthwhile learning to strap your ankle or invest in an ankle brace. See figure 1 for a sample of one type of ankle brace and ankle strapping. There is no proof that one type or manufacturer's product is better than the other. Braces can be cumbersome and are usually worn by court based athletes rather than field based.



Figure 1

It is important to continue the strength and balance training program that you had been doing through the preceding phases. This can be used as a warm up, cool down or done as a separate session, but definitely should become part of your routine.

Transition into play

Jogging can transition into sprinting and gentle curves can transition into tighter curves and eventually sharp cutting / change of direction. When sprinting and sharp cutting can be performed in predictable uniform drills you are ready to perform field/court based team training sessions. If this is successful you can return to play.