

# Stable Ankle Fracture

## Patient Information Leaflet

Trauma & Orthopaedic Department



The Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website is available on the link:  
<https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets> or scan the QR code.

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## Introduction

You have a break to the bone on the outside of your ankle. This simple break heals well without an operation or plaster. You may have been provided with a boot and/or crutches.



## Healing

The fracture (broken bone) will take around 6-12 weeks to heal.

Smoking slows down healing. We advise you to stop (at least whilst recovering from your injury). Talk to your GP or go online at <https://www.nhs.uk/smokefree>

We do not routinely follow up these injuries; they recover well with self-management. Please contact the team if after 12 weeks you still have significant pain, or if you are still using the boot or crutches at 6 weeks.

## Caring for your injury week 1-4

**Remember to wear your boot when standing or walking for the first four weeks.** You can take the boot off to sleep at night and when resting.




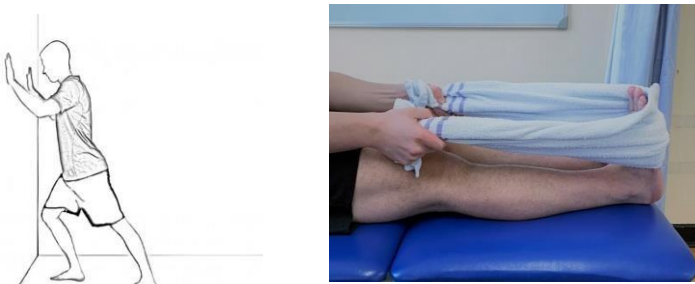
**Using ice can help with your pain and swelling.** Wrap a damp tea towel around a bag of frozen peas and place on your foot and ankle for up to 15 minutes, each hour, as needed. Do not use ice if the feeling in your foot or ankle is reduced, or if you have skin problems.

**Rest your ankle for the first 24 – 72 hours after your injury.** Sit more than usual and keep your foot lifted off the floor on a stool or cushions. This will help to reduce the swelling.

## Ankle exercises

Movement of your foot and ankle is important to help your circulation and reduce the risk of developing a blood clot (deep vein thrombosis or DVT).

**Start these exercises now**, moving as far as you can comfortably. Repeat 3-4 times a day.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Point your toes down as far as you can.</li> <li>2. Pull them up toward you.</li> </ol> <p>Repeat for 15-30 seconds</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make gentle circles with your foot in one direction.</li> <li>2. Make gentle circles with your foot in the opposite direction.</li> </ol> <p>Repeat for 15-30 seconds.</p>
<p><b>Seated Ankle Glides</b></p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sit on a chair; keep your heel in contact with the floor throughout. Slide your foot out.</li> <li>2. Slide your foot back as far as you are able. Aim for FULL movement. Repeat 12-15 times.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Calf Stretch</b></p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stand with injured leg out straight or if sitting hook a towel around your foot and pull back towards you.</li> <li>2. Feel the stretch in your calf.</li> </ol> <p>Hold 20-30 seconds.</p> <p>Repeat 3 times.</p>

## Caring for your injury week 4-6

**You can now stop using your boot/crutches.** To start with, try this for short periods around the house. Build up to longer amounts of time in one go and walking outdoors. You should not be using your boot/crutches after 6 weeks.



**Gradually increase the amount of time you spend up on your feet**, along with your general, day to day activity levels. Return to sport when you are pain free and have full movement in your ankle.

## Caring for your injury week 6-12

**It is normal to still have some swelling and discomfort.** This may continue up to a year after your injury.

**You should no longer be using your boot or crutches.** You are now ready to start to challenge your foot and ankle more, with harder exercises. This last stage of rehabilitation is important to improve your balance and reduce the risk of you injuring your ankle again.

**Start these exercises to improve your muscle strength and balance:**

<p><b>Sit – Stand (Chair Squat)</b></p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Start by sitting on the edge of a chair with feet shoulder width apart. Bend from the hips, lean forward and drive up into a standing position, ensuring your bodyweight is directed through your heels.</li><li>2. Stand up, without using your hands if you can.</li></ol> <p><b>Repeat x 10</b></p>
<p><b>Single Leg Balance</b></p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Hold onto your kitchen worktop or the back of a chair. Stand on your injured leg and balance. Gradually try to do the exercise without holding onto to anything.</li><li>2. Closing your eyes makes the exercise harder.</li><li>3. Standing on something wobbly (like a cushion) makes this harder still.</li></ol> <p><b>Aim for 20-30 seconds of balancing</b></p>

## Disclaimer

Not all exercises are suitable for everyone, and while every precaution has been taken in selecting these exercises, they do not come without risks. If you have any concerns regarding your injury, or whether you should partake in the exercises, then you should consult your GP or physiotherapist before beginning any exercises in this leaflet.

It is quite normal to feel some discomfort following exercise, but it is important that this discomfort eases within 2 hours of finishing the exercise and does not have an overall negative effect on your symptoms.

The exercise plans shown in this leaflet are designed to be used as a guide and a point of reference; they can be modified and progressed under the supervision of your physiotherapist.

## Frequently asked questions

### When can I drive?

You must not drive with the boot on. It is your own responsibility. You are allowed to drive when:

- You can safely control the car
- You are no longer using the boot
- You are walking normally
- You can perform an emergency stop.

### When can I go back to work?

This depends on your individual situation. You can return to work when you feel able to do your job. Consider a phased return where needed/possible.

### What do I do with my boot and crutches once I have finished with them?

Please return crutches to the Fracture Clinic or Emergency Department. You do not need to return your boot.

For more information online, please visit <https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/virtual-fracture-clinic>

## Further Advice

If you have any concerns regarding your ankle, contact:

**Fracture Clinic:** 01942 822595 Monday to Friday 8.30am until 5pm.

If you are struggling to regain your movement or get back to normal activities, you can self refer to **Physiotherapy**. A referral form can be found on this webpage.

**<https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/adult-msk-physiotherapy-self-referral>**

If you have any urgent concerns out of hours, please call 111.

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## Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends, and carers.

## Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am until 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager  
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
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Wigan Lane  
Wigan  
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## Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the positives and negatives of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



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## How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use, and store the information we hold about you, please see patient information leaflet, Ref. **Corp 006** How we use your information, this can be found on the Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website, see details on the front cover.

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This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille, and other languages upon request. For more information, please ask in the department/ward.

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