

Ankle Instability

Ankle Instability results from one or more dislocations, or partial dislocations, called subluxations, where the ankle joint partially or completely dislocates. With each occurrence the internal soft tissues of the ankle are stretched or damaged making the ankle joint more susceptible to dislocating again. Ankle instability increases the chance of further dislocation with every occurrence due to damage and stretching of tissues, ligaments, and other internal structures.

Patients with ankle instability often report feeling like their ankle is going to give out. Doctors may refer to this feeling as apprehension.

Other common symptoms of ankle instability include:

- Pain with certain movements of the ankle or foot
- Popping or grinding sound may be heard or felt
- Recurrent Subluxation: When the ankle slips partially out of place repeatedly.
- Recurrent Dislocation: When the ankle slips all the way out of position repeatedly.
- Severe pain, swelling and bruising of the ankle immediately following subluxation or dislocation
- Visible deformity and loss of function of the ankle occurs after subluxation or dislocation.
- Sensation changes such as numbness or even partial paralysis can occur below the dislocation as a result of pressure on nerves and blood vessels.

The goal of conservative treatment for Ankle Instability is to restore stability, strength, and full range of motion.

Conservative treatments measures may include the following:

- **Closed Reduction:** Following a dislocation, your Orthopaedist can often manipulate the ankle joint, usually under anesthesia, realigning it into proper position. Surgery may still be necessary to restore normal function depending on your situation.
- **Medications:** Over the counter pain meds such as aspirin and NSAID's (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) such as ibuprofen can help with the pain and swelling.
- **Rest:** Rest the injured ankle as much as possible and avoid activities that require use.
- **Ice:** Ice packs applied to the injury will help diminish swelling and pain. Ice should be applied over a towel to the affected area for 20 minutes every hour. Never place ice directly over the skin.
- **Occupational Therapy:** Your physician may refer you to a therapist for instruction in strengthening and stretching exercises.

When conservative treatment measures are unsuccessful at relieving ankle instability then surgery is considered to stabilize the ankle. Talk to your Foot and Ankle Specialist to determine what surgical option is best for your situation.