

Other Injuries to the Ankle

The classic ankle sprain, involving tearing of the lateral (outside) ankle ligaments, is the most common sporting injury. However there are many other parts of the ankle which can also be injured. A 'high ankle sprain' (see syndesmosis injury) is often mistaken for a lateral ligament injury. Another injury which mimics a lateral ankle sprain is a lateral midfoot sprain. This usually involves the 'bifurcate ligament', and may be associated with a fracture. Sprains can also be complicated by injuries to bones, cartilage & other soft tissues other than ligaments. Several tendons, which join muscle to bone, cross the ankle in places where they are vulnerable to overstretching or to compression between bones. Tendon tears or crush injuries are not uncommon, are generally very slow to heal, and can be quite problematic for the athlete. Another common complication of ankle injuries is 'impingement'. This is where there is inadequate space for normal ankle movement, and soft-tissues get pinched as a consequence. This can be due to bony spurs, swollen soft-tissues or other bony irregularities. Some people are prone to impingement because they have a larger than normal bony projection behind the ankle. This is often non-problematic until an ankle injury disrupts the status-quo of the area.

Unless your ankle injury is very mild, & recovers quickly, you should have it properly assessed so that an accurate diagnosis can be made. An XRay or other type of investigation may be necessary if the diagnosis is unclear. The correct early management can have a large bearing on the ease of overall recovery, so advice should be sought soon after injury.