

FOOT SPRAINS & STRAINS

*How Physical
Therapy Can Help*

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FOOT SPRAINS OR STRAINS



A MESSAGE FROM DR. CHRISTIAN, DPT

FOOT SPRAINS AND STRAINS SOLUTIONS

This is the time of the year when the weather is finally cooling down and we can enjoy the outdoors (before it gets too cold!). Walking around the great outdoors can provide us with many different obstacles, such as mole hills and uneven grassy surfaces. This can make it very easy to get our foot caught and trip, and before we know it, we have an ankle sprain on our hands. Ankle sprains can cause us to lose our balance and foot flexibility, which over time can cause our hips, back, and knees to hurt. If we are not quick to address our recovery, then our ankle sprain can cause other body parts to experience pain and further increase our overall pain levels.

Thankfully, addressing ankle sprains and strains when they initially happen can significantly cut down on recovery time. Outdated advice has led people to believe that bedrest is the best way to recover from this type of injury. However, research

has now shown that pain-free movement can accelerate the inflammation process and speed up the recovery time. There is certainly a fine line when it comes to what type of movement and exercise is appropriate for a new injury; that's where the assistance from a skilled movement expert such as a Physical Therapist can help.

Once the initial pain and swelling has returned to normal, one may feel "unstable" on their ankle. That's where balance and strength training can help your ankle return to normal again. Our ligaments that hold our ankle together will loosen up following a severe ankle sprain, which is why it is so important to strengthen the muscles around the ankle to prevent arthritis to occur down the road. Whether you are dealing with a freshly rolled ankle, or ankle pain from a sprain that occurred years ago, Physical Therapy can be the right choice for you!

How We Treat Your FOOT SPRAIN OR STRAIN

Have you recently injured your ankle or foot? Do you have persistent pain since spraining your ankle? Knowing the difference between a mild problem that goes away on its own and one that lingers on indefinitely is the job of a physical therapist.

At Joint Restoration Center, we are committed to helping you get the results you need to resume your life without limits! While many factors can lead to foot and ankle pain, sprains/strains are common examples. Even if your pain subsides, dysfunction may still be present and lead to re-injury or chronic pain.

If you have noticed limited mobility, persistent pain, or balance and gait problems since your injury, Joint Restoration Center can help. We will determine the type of injury (i.e., a sprain or strain) and provide you with the necessary treatments for healing and tips to avoid re-injury.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SPRAIN AND STRAIN?

A sprain happens when a ligament (the tissue that connects one bone) is stretched or torn. Sprains are typically the result of a trauma, a deceleration (slowing down) movement, or a sudden change in direction. The most common symptoms include pain, inflammation, muscle spasm, and sometimes an inability to move the joints where the injury occurred.

Strains occur to a muscle or tendon (the tissue that connects muscle to bone). Strains usually happen when the muscle suddenly contracts, like running, jumping, or repetitive and awkward movements. The symptoms of strains are similar to those associated with sprains, making them difficult to tell apart without doing a physical therapy examination.

There are three grades of sprains/strains that outline the severity of the injury.

Grade 1:

- Mild pain (rarely moderate or severe pain)
- No bruising
- Minimal swelling (sometimes no swelling)
- Tenderness to the touch at the site of the injury



Grade 2:

- Mild to moderate pain (rarely severe pain)
- Some bruising
- Mild to moderate swelling around the injury
- Tenderness to touch on-site and around the injury
- Often painful to put weight on your injured limb



Grade 3:

- Moderate to severe pain
- Significant bruising
- Moderate to severe swelling throughout the limb
- Tenderness to touch at the site and surrounding area of the injury
- Often severe pain or inability to put weight through the injured area
- Ligaments are torn (ruptured), and the joint will be loose/unstable from tearing, so it may require surgical intervention or the use of bracing to facilitate healing.

If you are unsure whether you sustained a sprain or strain, our physical therapists can help you figure it out.

TREATING A SPRAIN OR STRAIN WITH PHYSICAL THERAPY

Our physical therapists will perform a thorough assessment that includes a detailed history and a hands-on evaluation of the injured area at your initial evaluation. This assessment will help the therapist classify the injury's severity and develop a treatment plan to address your current situation.

Foot and ankle pain treatment depends on where the injury happened and how long ago it occurred. If it is not possible to walk more than two or three steps without pain, it is essential to visit a physical therapist as soon as possible.

The initial stages of physical therapy will focus on restoring any lost motion, reducing the swelling, and using all available treatments to alleviate any pain you may experience. Within a few hours of compression and elevation, most people notice that the swelling begins to subside, and with it, their pain. Next, we will design a program to restore your proprioception, balance, and strength so you can take on everyday activities.

Our comprehensive program will also look for any changes in your gait pattern that may make it difficult for you to move around freely. Dysfunctional movement patterns can last for years and lead to re-injury and potentially other injuries.

Our physical therapists will show you therapeutic exercises to address any underlying issue, such as a weakness that may be contributing to altered movement patterns, balance issues, and overall susceptibility to more injuries. People who sprain or strain their feet or ankles often find that they are continuously re-injuring that part of their body. Fortunately, this does not have to be the case with the help of physical therapy.

CALL TODAY TO SET UP AN APPOINTMENT

Whether you sustained a sprain or strain, physical therapy is the answer to achieving long-term relief. Contact Joint Restoration Center today to schedule a consultation or to find out more about how physical therapy can help relieve your foot and ankle pains!

TREATMENT FOCUS

Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) for Knee Pain and Osteoarthritis

Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) is derived from a patient's own blood, making it an autologous therapy. Blood is drawn and then processed to separate the platelets, which are rich in growth factors and bioactive proteins, from the rest of the components. These platelets are then concentrated to create PRP, which is subsequently injected into the target area, in this case, the knee joint.

HOW PRP WORKS

The growth factors present in PRP play a pivotal role in tissue regeneration and repair. When injected into the affected knee joint, PRP initiates a natural healing response. It stimulates cell proliferation, tissue regeneration, and collagen synthesis, promoting the repair of damaged cartilage and tissues, and potentially reducing inflammation. This regenerative approach sets PRP apart from traditional treatments that mainly focus on symptom management.

DATA SUPPORTING THE BENEFITS OF PRP

Numerous studies have explored the efficacy of PRP in treating knee pain and knee osteoarthritis. While individual results may vary, the collective data paint an encouraging picture:

- **Reduced Pain and Improved Function:** A 2019 meta-analysis in the *Journal of Orthopaedic Surgery and Research* concluded that PRP injections are associated with reduced pain and improved function in knee osteoarthritis patients. The analysis highlighted that PRP offers a safe and effective option for pain relief.

- **Cartilage Regeneration:** A 2019 study in *The American Journal of Sports Medicine* demonstrated that PRP injections can lead to significant improvements in cartilage quality and volume. The study suggested that PRP could potentially slow down the progression of knee osteoarthritis by promoting cartilage regeneration.
- **Long-Term Benefits:** A 2017 randomized controlled trial in *Osteoarthritis and Cartilage* followed patients over a two-year period and found that PRP injections provided sustained pain relief and improved knee function. This suggests that PRP may have lasting benefits beyond the immediate post-injection period.

While the emerging data on PRP's potential benefits for knee pain and osteoarthritis are promising, it's important to note that the optimal PRP preparation and injection techniques are still being refined. Additionally, not all patients may experience the same level of improvement, and individual responses can vary. As research in regenerative therapies continues to evolve, PRP remains an exciting avenue for managing knee pain and osteoarthritis. It offers a less invasive option with the potential to address the underlying causes of the condition, providing hope for those seeking alternatives to conventional treatments.

Book Your Appointment Today!



HEALTHY RECIPE

APPLE PIE CHIA SMOOTHIE

Yes, this actually tastes like pie!

So drink this instead and save yourself a ton of calories. The chia seeds have plenty of fiber and protein to keep you full until lunch.



- 1 apple cut into small pieces
- 1 cup almond milk
- 2 tablespoon chia seeds
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- A pinch nutmeg and salt

Blend all ingredients until smooth; add ice if desired.

<https://heliglow.co/fall-smoothies/> (Photo by Ana Stanciu)

HOME EXERCISE SEATED EXTENDED HEEL PUMPS

Relieves foot/ankle tension and improves flexibility

Start by sitting upright in a chair with one leg extended out in front of you and your foot slightly off the ground. Drive your toes up toward your knee by flexing your ankle joint and hold this pressure for 5 seconds. Relax your foot. Repeat 3 sets, 5 reps each.



Always consult with your physical therapist before starting new exercises.

918.205.2608

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