

Ankle Fractures

Explanation of Diagnosis

An **ankle fracture** is a **break in one or more of the bones** that make up the ankle joint (**tibia, fibula, talus**). It can range from a **simple, stable fracture** to a **complex, displaced break** requiring surgery. Symptoms include **severe pain, swelling, bruising, inability to bear weight, and deformity in severe cases**. Recovery depends on the **severity of the fracture and treatment approach (cast, boot, or surgery)**.

Specific Work Modifications

- **If non-weight-bearing**, use **crutches, a walker, or a knee scooter** to move safely.
- **Modify tasks** to allow for **seated work** and limit walking.
- **If weight-bearing is allowed**, use a **walking boot** as directed.
- **Take frequent breaks to elevate the ankle** to reduce swelling.
- **Avoid uneven surfaces and stairs** to prevent reinjury.

Specific Activity Modifications

- **Avoid high-impact activities** (running, jumping, hiking) until fully healed.
- **Modify workouts** by switching to **upper body or seated exercises**.
- **Consider swimming or stationary cycling** once cleared for light activity.
- **Gradually reintroduce weight-bearing sports** with physical therapy guidance.

Recommended Supplements

- **Calcium (1000-1200 mg daily)** - Supports bone healing.
- **Vitamin D3 (1000-2000 IU daily)** - Enhances calcium absorption.
- **Magnesium (300-400 mg daily)** - Aids in bone and muscle recovery.
- **Collagen peptides (10 g daily)** - Supports bone and connective tissue repair.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids (1000 mg daily)** - Reduces inflammation and stiffness.

Recommended Nutrition and Hydration

Diet Recommendations:

- **Bone-strengthening foods:** Dairy products, leafy greens, almonds, salmon, and fortified cereals.
- **Anti-inflammatory foods:** Fatty fish, turmeric, berries, and walnuts.
- **Protein-rich foods:** Chicken, eggs, lentils, and dairy to support tissue repair.

- **Limit processed foods, excess sugar, and carbonated drinks**, which can weaken bones.

Hydration Tips:

- **Drink at least 2-3 liters of water daily** to support bone healing.
- **Limit caffeine and alcohol**, which can reduce calcium absorption.

Home Exercise Prescription

⚠ **No weight-bearing exercises until cleared by your doctor.** Focus on **gentle mobility and strengthening exercises** while protecting the fracture.

Phase 1: Early Recovery (Weeks 1-6, Reduce Pain & Swelling)

1. **Toe Wiggles & Ankle Pumps** (Only if non-surgical and pain-free)
 - Move toes and ankles up and down to maintain circulation.
 - **10 reps, 2-3 times daily.**
2. **Non-Weight-Bearing Calf Stretch**
 - Sit and use a towel to gently pull toes toward the shin.
 - **Hold for 20-30 seconds, repeat 3 times per foot.**
3. **Seated Foot Alphabet Exercise**
 - Use your toes to "write" the alphabet in the air.
 - **1-2 times daily.**

Phase 2: Strength & Balance (After Cast/Boot Removal, If Cleared by Doctor)

4. **Towel Scrunches (Arch Strengthening)**
 - Place a towel under your foot and use your toes to pull it toward you.
 - **10 reps, 2 times daily.**
5. **Heel Raises (Once Pain-Free)**
 - Stand and slowly raise onto your toes, then lower.
 - **10 reps, 2 times daily.**
6. **Single-Leg Balance Exercise**
 - Stand on the affected foot for **15-30 seconds**, increasing time as tolerated.
 - **Repeat 2-3 times per leg.**

⚠ **Avoid running, jumping, or high-impact activities until fully healed (typically 8-12 weeks).**

Helpful Books

1. *"Strong Bones: The Ultimate Guide to Preventing and Treating Osteoporosis"* - Pamela

Wartian Smith, MD

2. *"The Healthy Runner's Handbook: Injury Prevention & Recovery"* - Jason Karp, PhD

Click here for more orthopedic patient information.

Contact a Key West orthopedic clinic or reach out to Dr. Jason Pirozzolo.