

Ankle Instability

Explanation of Diagnosis

Ankle instability is a **chronic condition** where the **ankle repeatedly gives way** due to **weakened ligaments and muscles**, often following **repeated sprains or inadequate rehabilitation**. Symptoms include **frequent ankle rolling, pain, swelling, and a feeling of unsteadiness** on uneven surfaces or during activity.

Specific Work Modifications

- **Avoid prolonged standing or walking on uneven surfaces.**
- **Wear supportive shoes with ankle stabilization** (high-top sneakers or ankle brace).
- **Use anti-fatigue mats** if standing for long periods.
- **Modify tasks to allow sitting breaks** and reduce stress on the ankle.
- **Avoid carrying heavy loads** that could increase fall risk.

Specific Activity Modifications

- **Avoid high-impact activities** (running, jumping, hiking on uneven terrain) until stability improves.
- **Modify workouts** by switching to **low-impact exercises** like swimming, cycling, or elliptical training.
- **Use an ankle brace or tape** when returning to sports.
- **Perform ankle-strengthening and balance exercises daily** to prevent re-injury.

Recommended Supplements

- **Collagen peptides (10 g daily)** - Supports ligament and tendon strength.
- **Vitamin C (500 mg daily)** - Aids in collagen synthesis and tissue healing.
- **Magnesium (300-400 mg daily)** - Helps with muscle relaxation and recovery.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids (1000 mg daily)** - Reduces inflammation.
- **Turmeric (500 mg twice daily)** - Supports joint and ligament health.

Recommended Nutrition and Hydration

Diet Recommendations:

- **Anti-inflammatory foods:** Fatty fish (salmon, sardines), turmeric, berries, nuts, and leafy greens.
- **Collagen-boosting foods:** Bone broth, citrus fruits, and bell peppers.
- **Protein-rich foods:** Chicken, eggs, lentils, and dairy to support ligament repair.

- **Limit processed foods, sugar, and alcohol**, which can worsen inflammation.

Hydration Tips:

- **Drink at least 2-3 liters of water daily** to support muscle and joint health.
- **Limit caffeine and alcohol**, which can dehydrate tissues and slow recovery.

Home Exercise Prescription

Perform **2-3 times daily** to strengthen the ankle and improve stability:

Phase 1: Strengthening (Weeks 1-4, Rebuild Ligament Support)

1. Towel Scrunches (Arch Strengthening)

- Place a towel under your foot and scrunch it toward you using your toes.
- **10 reps, 2 times daily.**

2. Resistance Band Ankle Strengthening

- Use a resistance band to strengthen ankle movements (**up, down, inward, outward**).
- **10 reps per direction, 2 times daily.**

3. Heel Raises

- Stand and slowly raise onto your toes, then lower.
- **10 reps, 2 times daily.**

Phase 2: Balance & Proprioception (Weeks 4+, Prevent Future Injuries)

4. Single-Leg Balance Exercise

- Stand on the affected foot for **15-30 seconds**, increasing time as tolerated.
- **Repeat 2-3 times per leg.**

5. Balance Board or Bosu Ball Training

- Stand on a wobble board or Bosu ball to challenge stability.
- **1-2 minutes, 1-2 times daily.**

6. Heel-to-Toe Walk (Tightrope Walking)

- Walk in a straight line, placing one foot directly in front of the other.
- **20 steps, 2 times daily.**

⚠ **Avoid uneven terrain, running, or cutting movements until stability improves.**

Helpful Books

1. *"Rehab Science: How to Overcome Pain and Heal from Injury"* - Tom Walters, DPT
2. *"The Athlete's Guide to Ankle & Foot Injuries"* - Brian Shiple, DO

Click [here](#) for more orthopedic patient information.

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