

Preventing and Managing Sprains

What is a Sprain?

A **sprain** is an injury where **ligaments (tissues connecting bones)** are **stretched or torn**, usually due to **twisting, falling, or sudden impact**. Sprains commonly affect the **ankle, wrist, or knee**.

Signs & Symptoms of a Sprain

- ✓ Pain and tenderness around the joint
- ✓ Swelling and bruising
- ✓ Limited movement or stiffness
- ✓ A popping sensation at the time of injury (in severe cases)

Immediate Treatment: The R.I.C.E. Method

Rest - Avoid putting weight on the injured area for **24-48 hours**.

Ice - Apply an **ice pack for 15-20 minutes every 2-3 hours** for the first 48 hours.

Compression - Wrap with an **elastic bandage (not too tight)** to reduce swelling.

Elevation - Keep the injured area **above heart level** to decrease swelling.

When to Seek Medical Help

Severe pain or inability to bear weight on the joint

Numbness, tingling, or weakness in the limb

Visible deformity or extreme swelling

No improvement after 5-7 days

Preventing Sprains

- ✓ **Warm up & stretch** before physical activity.
- ✓ **Wear supportive shoes** with good grip.
- ✓ **Strengthen muscles** around joints (ankle, knee, wrist).
- ✓ **Use braces or taping** if prone to sprains.
- ✓ **Be cautious on uneven surfaces** to avoid missteps.

Rehabilitation & Recovery

After **48 hours**, begin **gentle movement & stretching** (as pain allows).

Strengthening exercises (once swelling subsides) to rebuild joint stability.

Avoid returning to high-impact activities too soon to prevent re-injury.

Bottom Line

- ✓ **Follow R.I.C.E. treatment** immediately after injury.

- ✓ Gradually return to movement & strengthening exercises.
- ✓ Prevent future sprains with proper warm-ups & supportive footwear.
- ✓ Seek medical attention for severe pain, swelling, or instability.

Click here for more orthopedic patient information.

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