Balance Exercise

Standing on one leg with your knee slightly bent. Try and balance for up to 10 seconds.

You can make this more difficult by closing your eyes.

Things to look out for

If you notice any of the following associated with your foot and ankle pain, please make an urgent appointment with your GP:

- A fever or feeling unwell
- A red, hot and swollen foot or ankle
- Constant pain unchanged by activity or rest
- Unexplained weight loss
- Previous history of cancer

Further information

For further information about foot and ankle pain, please see our advice pages *www.citycarephysio.org.uk*

CityCare
Building Healthier Communities

Foot and Ankle Pain

Your guide to managing your pain and relieving your symptoms

Foot and ankle pain is very common. It can occur for many reasons including simple sprains and strains, normal age-related changes or conditions such as Achilles tendinopathy or plantar fasciitis.

The most common painful areas are around the sides of the ankle or more localised areas such as the Achilles tendon; under the heel (plantar fasciitis) or in the ball of the foot (metatarsalgia).

You may find that activities such as walking, running or going up on to your toes uncomfortable.

NHS

What causes foot and ankle pain?

- **Ligament sprains**

  Ankle ligament sprains are very common. Sudden twisting movements or a fall can over stretch these ligaments and injure them. Most ligament sprains settle within 6 weeks but they can sometimes last longer. If your symptoms are not settling then it is best for you to speak with your GP or a physiotherapist.

- **Tendinopathies**

  Sometimes the tendons that surround the ankle can become painful. This is normally because of a sudden change in your daily routine or exercise programme. The most common example is Achilles Tendinopathy. With appropriate changes to your routine, this type of pain normally settles after a few weeks. Sometimes symptoms can last longer. If this is the case then you may find it helpful to speak to a physiotherapist for some advice.

What can I do to help?

- **Footwear**

  Choose shoes with cushioned soles and good arch support.

- **Activity modification**

  Whilst gentle exercise is usually beneficial, reducing activities which are aggravating your pain for a short time may help your symptoms to settle. As your pain improves, these activities can be reintroduced gradually.

- **Medication**

  If your pain is under control you are better able to keep active and exercise. Speak to your pharmacist or GP about what painkillers are suitable for you.

- **Weight Loss**

  If you are overweight, trying to lose some weight will reduce the load on your feet and ankles and often improve your pain, as well as being good for your general health.

- **Lifestyle**

  Low mood, anxiety, stress, poor sleep and lack of exercise can all affect how we experience pain. Addressing these factors can improve symptoms and general well-being. Speak with your GP if you feel you need support with these issues.

Do I need an x-ray or scan?

Investigations such as x-rays or MRI scans are not normally needed. Often they will show signs of normal age-related change but will not change how your foot and ankle pain is managed.

Do I need surgery?

Most foot and ankle pain can be managed with a combination of exercise, medication and lifestyle changes. Only very occasionally are injections or surgery needed and this is normally in very persistent cases.

Simple Exercises

Heel Raises

Stand behind a chair and use both hands for support. Stand on your affected leg. Slowly lift your heel off the ground by pushing up onto your toes.

You can do this exercise standing on both feet if standing on one leg is too difficult.

Repeat 10 times.

Calf Stretch

Sit with one leg straight out in front of you and place a towel around your foot.

Gently pull on the ends of the towel and feel the stretch in your calf. Hold for around 15 secs.

Repeat 5 times.