

# Preventing Ankle Sprains

Walking, entering and exiting a vehicle, and long workdays can put many miles on your legs and feet increasing the risk for an ankle injury. The most common ankle injury is a sprain.

## What is an ankle sprain?

- Ankle sprains stretch or tear the tendons or ligaments that support your ankle.
- The most common area strained is the outside of your ankle.
- Multiple ankle sprains reduce stability and increase your risk to sprain the ankle again.

## What is the best way to avoid ankle injuries?

- Keep your feet under you and maintain full foot contact with the surface you are walking on.
- Avoid walking on uneven paths and surfaces.
- Keep your eyes off devices and watch where you are walking.

## How can I prevent an ankle injury?

- Good balance, leg strength, and flexibility are important for prevention.
- Make sure that you are wearing an appropriate shoe that fits your foot well.
- Check that the shoe has good grip for the ground that you will be walking on.
- Follow the stretches and exercises provided to improve your odds of avoiding ankle injury.

## WARM-UP ACTIVITIES and STRETCHES



**HAMSTRING STRETCH** - With your foot on an elevated surface (like the running board) and keeping your knee straight, bend forward at the hip until you feel a gentle stretch on the back of your leg. Hold 15-30 seconds. Repeat 3-5 times on each leg.



**2-IN-1 CALF STRETCH** - Place one leg with the knee straight behind you, and the other leg forward with the knee slightly bent. Keep your heels on the ground and lean forward until you feel a stretch in the calf or your lower leg. You may feel more of a stretch on one leg than the other. Hold 15-30 seconds. Repeat 3-5 times. Alternate legs, and repeat the stretch.



**BALANCE** - Holding onto something for support, practice standing on one foot. Improving balance and structural support around the ankle will reduce your risk for ankle injury by better preparing your body to react to uneven terrain. Hold for 30 seconds and alternate feet. Repeat 3-5 times.



**MARCHING IN PLACE** – March in place, swing arms naturally to warm up your muscles and increase blood flow.



**CALF RAISES** – Holding on to a fixed object for balance, raise up and down on your toes to increase blood flow and strength to the calf muscles.

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