Sprained Ankle: Using a Compression Wrap

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Sprained Ankle: Using a Compression Wrap

Ankle sprains are common injuries that can result in lifelong problems. Some people with repeated or severe sprains can develop long-term joint pain and weakness. Treating a sprained ankle can help prevent ongoing ankle problems.

If an ankle sprain does not heal correctly, the joint may become unstable, resulting in a weakened and easily reinjured ankle. Proper initial care of your sprained ankle is critical.

- A compression wrap helps decrease swelling. If swelling is kept to a minimum, it may help your ankle feel better.
- Applying a compression wrap is easy and can be done at home.
- Elastic bandages are inexpensive and available at most drugstores.
- You can wear a protective brace, such as a splint or a device to keep your ankle from moving (immobilizer), over a compression wrap. This can help prevent further injury to your ankle when you try to bear weight on it.

How to apply a compression wrap

To help control swelling, some doctors recommend wrapping your ankle with an elastic bandage (See figure in appendix), also called an ACE wrap. This product can be purchased at most drugstores. To apply a compression wrap:

- Cut several horseshoe-shaped pieces of cloth felt to form a 0.5 in. (1.3 cm) thick pad. The pad will be placed (open end up) under the anklebone to help keep fluid out of the hollow
- Roll up the elastic bandage if it isn't already. Hold your ankle at about a 90-degree angle. Start where your toes meet the body of your foot. Hold the loose end of the bandage at the side of your foot. Wrap the bandage around the ball of your foot once, keeping it somewhat taut with a light pull.
- After this first wrap, slowly start circling your way around the arch of the foot. Pull the bandage diagonally from the bottom of the toes across the foot’s top and circle it around the ankle. Now bring the bandage diagonally across the top of the foot and under the arch in a figure-eight pattern.
- When you get to the anklebone, wrap the bandage around the felt piece so it stays in place under the anklebone. Continue around the ankle and foot in a figure eight, moving toward the heel on the bottom and toward the calf at the top of the eight. The wrap should cover the entire foot and end several inches above the ankle. Most compression wraps are self-fastening or come with clip fasteners. If not, use tape to secure the end.
- The wrap should be snug but should not cut off circulation to the foot. Check your toes. If they become purplish or blue, cool to the touch, or numb or tingly, the wrap is too tight and should be loosened. Also, loosen the wrap at night before bedtime.

Credits for Sprained Ankle: Using a Compression Wrap

By Healthwise Staff

Adam Husney, MD - Family Medicine
William H. Blahd, Jr., MD, FACEP - Emergency Medicine

Last Revised October 17, 2013

Appendix

Topic Images

Figure

Applying a Compression Wrap for a Sprained Ankle
A compression wrap is used to prevent swelling, which can help your ankle feel better. It does not support the ankle or prevent it from moving, so it does not protect it except by reminding you to be careful of your ankle.

Instructions

- Roll up the elastic bandage if it isn't already rolled up. Hold your ankle at about a 90-degree angle. Start where your toes meet the body of your foot. Hold the loose end of the bandage at the side of your foot. Wrap the bandage around the ball of your foot once, keeping it somewhat taut with a light pull.
- After this, slowly start circling your way around the arch of the foot. Pull the bandage diagonally from the bottom of the toes across the foot's top and circle it around the ankle. Now bring the bandage diagonally across the top of the foot and under the arch in a figure-eight pattern.
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