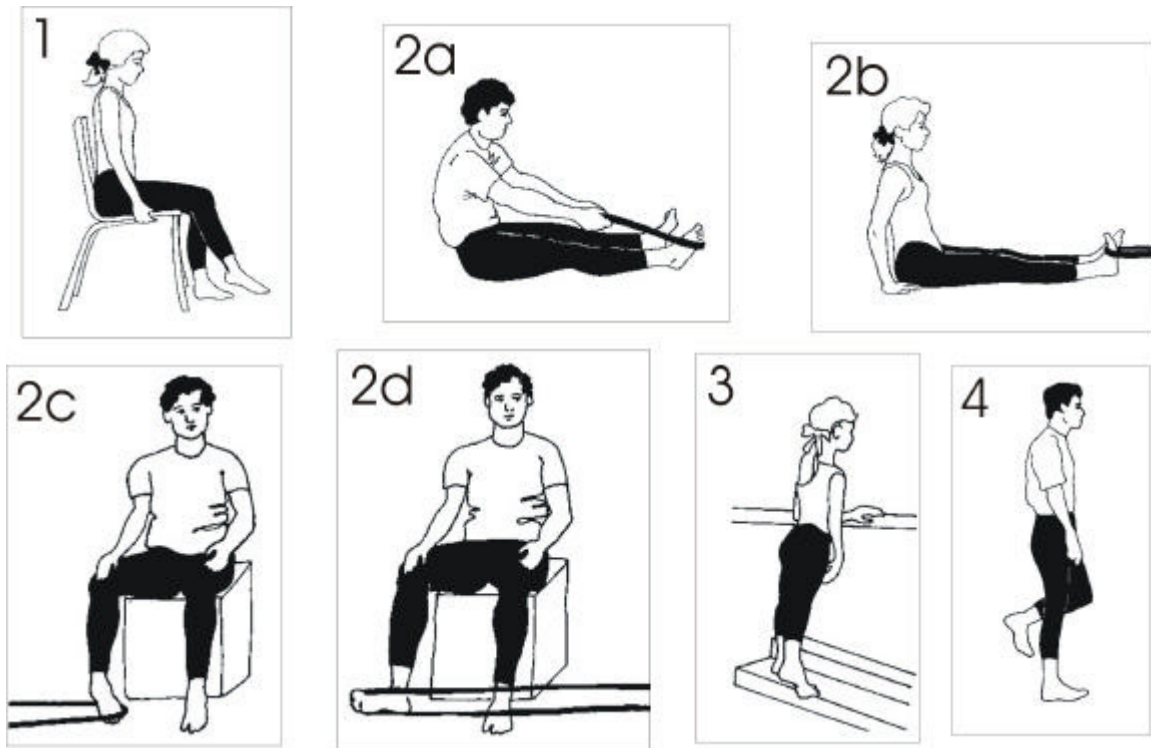


# REHABILITATION EXERCISES FOR AN ANKLE SPRAIN

The correct exercises will help you to return to sports or normal activity faster after an ankle sprain. The steps in rehabilitation involve:

- Restoring the ankle's range of motion (ROM)
- Building endurance
- Building strength
- Regaining normal proprioception (balancing ability)
- Returning to normal activity

The following exercises will help lead you through these steps:



## 1. Range of motion

**Alphabet exercise:** Apply an ice pack to your ankle for 20 minutes, then trace the alphabet with your toe while hanging your foot over the edge of a couch or table. Do this three times per day. Discontinue this exercise when you have full range of motion.

## 2. Endurance

Begin endurance exercises after you have regained full ankle motion. Use a 36-in.-long loop of elastic band (Theraband or bicycle inner tube). Do 30 repetitions of each of the following exercises three times per day:

- a. **Plantar flexion:** Hold one end of the elastic band with your hands and loop the other end around the ball of your foot. Pull on the band while pushing the ball of your foot away from your body. Hold for three counts. Repeat.
- b. **Dorsiflexion:** Loop one end of the elastic band around a secure object, such as a table leg, and the other end around your forefoot. Pull your forefoot back toward your trunk. Hold for three counts.
- c. **Inversion:** With the band looped around a secure object, sit in a chair. With your heel on the floor, swing your forefoot inward. Hold for three counts.
- d. **Eversion:** Start from the same position as in the inversion exercise but with the elastic band in the reverse direction, swinging your foot outward. Hold for three counts.

### 3. Strengthening

When these endurance exercises can be done easily and without discomfort, double the elastic band to make two loops and do 10 repetitions of the same exercises three times per day. Alternatively, do the exercises with a weight boot or tape a weight plate of brick to the sole of an old tennis shoe. In addition, do toe raise exercises: Stand with the balls of your feet on a step, and rise and stand on your toes. Hold for three counts. Do this exercise with your feet pointed straight ahead, then inward, then outward. Gradually progress to standing on one foot at a time.

### 4. Balance

**Stork-leg exercise:** Raise your uninjured foot and stand on only the injured foot for 1 minute. Repeat for a total of 5 minutes, three times per day. Advance to standing on one leg with your eyes closed.

### 5. Functional activities

When you are able to walk without pain or a limp, proceed to straight-ahead jogging on a smooth surface, then to figure-eight running, and finally to zigzag running.