

# Advice after breaking your ankle

## Fracture Clinic Patient Information Leaflet

### Your injury

A fracture is the same as a break in the bone. The ankle joint is made up of the bones in your lower leg (tibia and fibula). You have a break of one or more of these bones and there may also be ligament damage. This is a common fracture.

The common symptoms following this type of fracture include:

- Pain straight after an injury
- Swelling, mostly over the injured area
- Bruising
- Inability to weight bear
- Deformity at the site of injury



### Your treatment plan

You may be put in a cast or given a boot to wear to support your ankle; this will be used for 6 weeks whilst the injury heals. You will be told whether or not you can weight bear and will be given specific advice depending on the type of fracture you have. You are likely to require crutches or a frame to help you move safely. You will be given an appointment to return to fracture clinic for follow up as needed.

Occasionally an ankle fracture requires surgery to fix the bones. If this is the case your treating team will discuss this with you.

## What should I do at home?

- Use over the counter pain killers as required.
- Elevate the injured ankle when resting to help reduce swelling.
- In the first few weeks after injury, minimise the amount you move around to allow the pain and swelling to settle.
- You should not drive whilst in a cast or wearing a boot. You may drive an automatic car if you have injured your left ankle.
- You can return to work as soon as you are able to do your normal duties.

## How long will it take to heal?

Most fractures heal without any problems in six to twelve weeks. However, it may take six to twelve months for your symptoms to settle completely – these can include pain or discomfort, stiffness, swelling, and decreased strength. The bones may take longer to heal if you suffer from diabetes or if you smoke.

For advice on stopping smoking please visit [www.nhs.uk/smokefree](http://www.nhs.uk/smokefree) or discuss this with your GP.

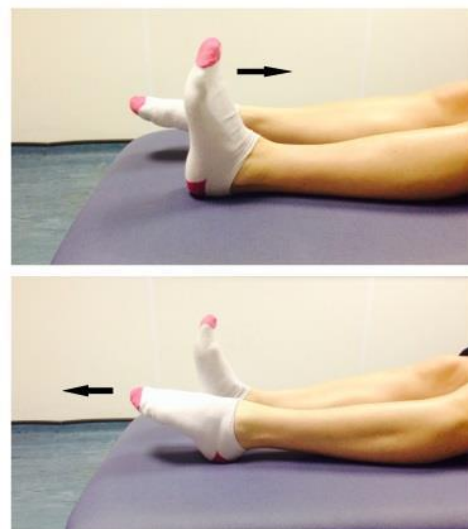
Once the fracture has started to heal some people might be referred to their local physiotherapy department for assessment, advice and rehabilitation.

## Exercises

You should try to do these exercises three to four times a day; you can start them immediately if you have been given a boot or once the cast is removed.

**Ankle and foot range of movement exercises. Repeat these ten times each:**

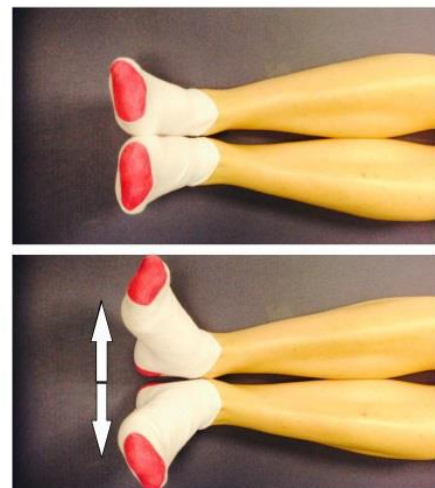
1. Point your foot up and down within a comfortable range of movement.



2. Make circles with your foot in one direction and then change direction.



3. With your heels together, move your toes apart, as shown in the picture



**If you have any worries or concerns please contact one of the following:**

**Virtual Fracture Clinic Helpline 01225 821668 or Fracture Clinic 01225 825602**

Trauma and Orthopaedic Department  
Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust  
Combe Park, Bath BA1 3NG  
01225 428331 [www.ruh.nhs.uk](http://www.ruh.nhs.uk)

Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital. Email [ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net](mailto:ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net) or telephone 01225 825656.