

Frequently asked questions

For how long will I experience swelling and/or discomfort in my foot/ankle?

You can expect swelling, discomfort or hypersensitivity for up to one year after fracture. This is normal and does not mean there is anything to worry about. Keeping moving helps.

Why does my ankle look a funny shape?

As a fracture heals, new bone is formed which joins the broken ends together. This can result in a lump forming. It will gradually smooth out over 12 to 18 months.

When can I start driving again?

This varies and can be as much as eight weeks after your cast is removed. You can start driving when you have enough movement and strength to control the pedals and perform an emergency stop safely.

Should I stop the exercises if my ankle swells or aches?

It is normal to expect some increase in swelling or mild soreness when doing the exercises. You can take simple painkillers such as paracetamol to help.

How will I know when I can walk without crutches?

This varies. Your physiotherapist or consultant will tell you when you can put any weight through your foot after your cast is removed.

Are you aged over 50?

People who are over 50 who break a bone should be referred automatically for a DEXA scan to check for bone fragility. If you haven't had an appointment and you think you should have one, please ask your GP, physiotherapist or hospital doctor. Vitamin D and calcium are important for healthy bones. For further information visit: www.nhsinform.scot

Further advice and information

Further injury advice and prevention can be found at:

NHSinform - www.nhsinform.scot

National Osteoporosis Society - www.nos.org.uk

NHS Western Isles Physiotherapy Department:

Western Isles Hospital
MacAulay Road
Stornoway
Isle of Lewis HS1 2AF
Tel. 01851 708258

Uist and Barra Hospital
Balivanich
Benbecula
HS7 5LA
Tel. 01870 603641

We are listening - how did we do?

We welcome your feedback, as it helps us evaluate the services we provide. If you would like to tell us about your experience:

- speak to a member of staff
- visit our website: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/feedback or share your story at: www.careopinion.org.uk or tel. 0800 122 31 35
- tel. 01851 708069 Monday-Friday between 9am-5.30pm.

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Disclaimer

The content of this leaflet is intended to augment, not replace, information provided by your clinician. It is not intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Reading this information does not create or replace a doctor-patient relationship or consultation. If required, please contact your doctor or other health care provider to assist you to interpret any of this information, or in applying the information to your individual needs.



Bòrd SSN nan Eilean Siar
NHS Western Isles

Getting your ankle moving after your cast is removed



Useful information and advice

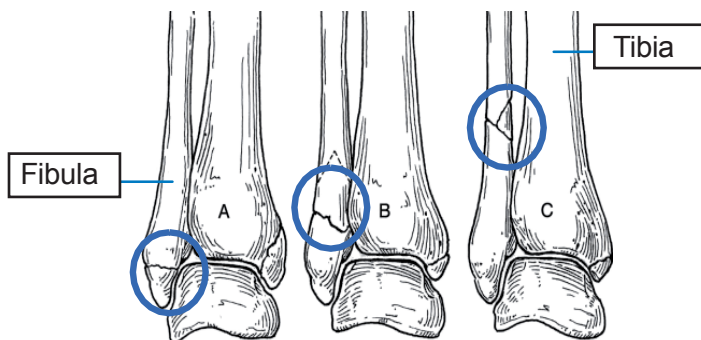
This leaflet is aimed at providing useful advice for those who have had their cast removed.

Information will support the advice given by your physiotherapist and consultant.

What is a broken ankle?

- A fracture is the same as a break.
- It normally involves a break to the fibula on the outside of your lower leg. It can occur at different levels (see diagram).
- Occasionally the tibia bone may also fracture.

How is it treated?



Cast: Your ankle may need to be manipulated into the correct position first. You will usually be in a cast for four to six weeks. This could be plaster of Paris, air cast boot, or scotch cast.

Surgery: In some cases, an operation is required. The ends of the bone are held in place with pins and plates.

What should I expect on removal of the cast?

It is normal for your ankle to feel vulnerable once out of plaster because it hasn't been moved for a long time. It is important that swelling, pain, strength and stiffness are addressed.

Pain: It is normal to have some pain once the cast comes off. You should take the painkillers you have been prescribed. If the pain is severe, you should contact your GP, Emergency Department or NHS24 by telephoning 111.

Swelling: Swelling is common once you start moving again. It reduces your ability to move your ankle. To minimise swelling, try the following:

- rest with your leg up
- put your leg on a pillow at night
- apply an icepack. Wrap a bag of ice in a wet tea-towel and put this on your ankle for 15 minutes.

Stiffness: It is important to try and get as much movement as possible in your ankle after the fracture has healed. Exercising and help to reduce stiffness. Your physiotherapist will guide you.

Strength: You will have decreased strength in the muscles around your ankle as they have not been used much. You should increase how much you use your ankle gradually, as advised by your physiotherapist.

Exercises

Exercise, like medication, requires a specific dose. Not enough will be of no benefit, and too much may do harm. Only exercise to a comfortable level.

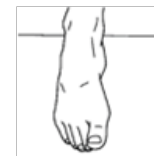
Mild discomfort is normal, as long as it settles during the day.

Stretching exercises can be started as soon as your cast is removed and carried out four or five times a day, until you see your physiotherapist.

Daily exercises



Lying on your back or sitting. Bend and straighten your ankles. Hold for 10 seconds in each position. Keep your knees straight. Repeat 10 times.



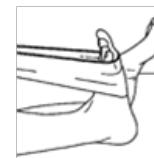
Sitting or lying. Move your ankle around slowly in a large circle. Repeat in opposite direction. Repeat 10 times.



Sitting on a chair. Alternately raise your toes and heels. Repeat 10 times.



Sit on a chair and cross the ankle to be stretched over the other knee. Place your hand on the top of your foot and gently stretch your ankle (point toes). Feel the stretch in your shin. Hold for approximately 10 seconds.



Sit with one leg straight out in front of you. Put a towel around your foot. Gently pull the towel and feel the stretch in your calf. Hold for approximately 10 seconds.

Remember - do not push into pain.