

## **Ligament Sprains of the ankle**

- A very common injury that usually happens to the ligaments on the outside of the ankle
- Usually happen when you “roll” the ankle
- There are 3 main ligaments on the outside of the ankle and are usually damaged from front to back. Which ligaments are damaged and to what degree helps to determine the severity of the sprain
- Ankle sprains are usually graded
  - Grade 1 = mild
  - Grade 2 = moderate
  - Grade 3 = severe
- Sprains on the inside of the ankle can happen but are far less common because the medial ligament (deltoid) is very strong – they usually involve severe trauma

### **What are the signs and symptoms?**

- Pain
- Swelling
- Bruising
- Possible difficulty weight-bearing and walking
- Weakness and or joint instability
- Swelling may stay for long periods

### **Why are they often a re-occurring problem?**

- If you have done a lot of damage – tissues may never fully recover leaving your ankle weak
- We also have a unique ability called ‘proprioception’ which is the ability for us to know where our foot is and how to place weight on it without having to look at it all the time. For example when we are going up and down stairs or running or stepping up or down from a gutter or footpath we don’t need to look at our feet.
- This is made possible by hundreds of messages going to our spinal cord and brain from the ligaments and small nerves in and around them about what the foot and ankle is doing.
- When we sprain our ankle these tissues become damaged and the messages are diminished
- When the swelling and pain has subsided you will need to re-train or rehabilitate your ankle to communicate these messages again properly or you have an increased risk of spraining your ankle again

## **Ligament Sprains of the ankle cont:**

### **What to do**

- R.I.C.E – Rest, Ice, Compress (with a bandage or ankle support and Elevate your leg.
- See your Osteopath to have a proper examination and diagnosis of the pain. If there has been trauma or the Osteopath believes the damage to the ligaments is severe you may also be referred for further investigation or imaging.
- Your Osteopath will probably apply gentle techniques to muscles in the leg that are associated with the ankle sprain and be able to apply gentle early mobilisation to the area safely which can help healing.
- Your Osteopath will give you instructions on how to safely care for the injury and how to do rehabilitation exercises at every stage of the healing through to complete recovery and help to prevent re-occurrence
- Your Osteopath may suggest changes to your training if this has been the cause.
- Take further measures to reduce inflammation ice or anti-inflammatory which should only be taken under direction and supervision of a healthcare professional.

### **What not to do**

- Do not apply heat to the region.
- Do not self prescribe exercises or stretches as these may irritate the problem.
- Do not apply deep heat creams or massage yourself.
- Do not attempt to continue with the activity or sport that caused the injury.