Ankle Stability Stretches/Exercises

• 85% of all ankle injuries are lateral sprains, which are caused by rolling the foot inward.

• This stretches or tears the ligaments that hold the ankle and foot bones together and can lead to instability and re-injury.

Speeding Up Recovery

• Protection – Your ankle may be splinted, taped, or braced to prevent re-injury.

• Rest – You should rest from all activities that cause pain or limping. Use crutches/cane until you can walk without pain or limping.

• Ice - Place a plastic bag with ice on the ankle for 20 minutes, 3-5 times a day for the first 24-72 hours. Leave the ice off at least 1 1/2 hours between applications.

Technique

• A thorough warm-up and stretching routine can be completed in less than 10 minutes.

• Because a warm muscle will stretch further than a cold muscle, it is always best to do a quick warm-up. Jogging a few laps around the parking lot or even doing some jumping jacks will work great.

Speeding Up Recovery Continued..

• Compression - Wrap an elastic bandage from the toes to mid calf, using even pressure. Wrap tighter around foot, and loosen as you go up ankle and calf. Wear this until swelling decreases. Loosen the wrap if your toes start to turn blue or feel cold.

• Elevation – Make sure to elevate the ankle above heart level as much as possible (hip level is acceptable during class).

Technique Continued..

• Because muscles will be warmest after a practice, greater gains in flexibility will be achieved by stretching at that time.

• The following stretches should be performed by holding the stretch for each target muscle for 3 seconds, relaxing that muscle, then repeating the stretch for a total of 10 repetitions on each side.
Foot: Plantar Fascia

• While on all fours, place your toes flat on the ground underneath. Push back with your arms until you feel the stretch in your feet.

Ankle

• Sit with your left leg straight. Bend your right leg and cross your right foot over and rest it to the outside of your left knee.
• Grab your right foot with your left hand to move the ankle.
• In addition, to circular motions of the ankle, be sure to point and flex the foot.
• Repeat the stretch on the other ankle.

Lower Leg and Calves

• From a pushup position, place your right foot over your left heel. Your weight should be on the ball of your left foot.
• Push your left foot down flat to the ground, keeping your left leg straight. You should feel a stretch in your calf and ankle.
• Repeat the stretch on the other leg.
• Try some of the other methods as well.
Ankle Circles
• Move your ankle in gentle circles, going one direction and then the other.
• Perform 10 repetitions per direction 3-4 times/day. Continue to do this until your ankles range of motion is the same for each ankle.

Heel Walking
• Walk so that your toes are above your heels. Walking on the heels makes you use the muscles that help restore your arch.
• Build up to at least 2 minutes per day and then more if tolerated.

One Leg Standing
• To regain balance and increase muscle control try standing on the injured leg without support if you can do so without pain.
• Try to build up to 2 minutes on each foot.
• When you have mastered this, you can increase the difficulty by standing on a pillow or a Bosu ball.
• A great way to remember this exercise is to do this while you are brushing your teeth.