



University of North Carolina Wilmington
Abrons Student Health Center

INSTRUCTION SHEET: FOOT INJURY, MILD Treatment: Soft Wrap

The Student Health Provider has diagnosed a foot injury, most likely a mild sprain. A sprain is a stretching or tear in the ligaments and tendons (rope-like bands holding bones and muscles in place) of a joint. No severe sprain, significant fracture (break) or dislocation is apparent.

Nevertheless, even a mild sprain is a significant injury, and should be treated, not ignored. Also, a hidden break could still be present; proper initial treatment of a sprain also treats a hidden hairline fracture. **However, if your symptoms persist, repeat evaluation is necessary.**

MEASURES YOU SHOULD TAKE TO HELP TREAT YOUR FOOT INJURY:

1. Above all, put the foot to rest! Resting the foot not only decreases pain, it also helps heal the foot more quickly. Minimize walking and standing on the injured foot for at least two days, then gradually ease back into normal walking.
2. Elevate the foot to reduce swelling, especially in the first 48 hours after the injury. Keep the foot up on pillows, above the level of the heart.
3. Apply cold to the foot off-and-on for the first 48 hours after injury. Cold helps decrease discomfort and swelling. Do not apply ice directly to the foot, causing discomfort. Rather, aim for coolness, yet comfort, applying a layer or two of cloth between the cold pack and foot.
4. After 48 hours, apply heat in the form of warm soaks. Moist heat increases circulation in the tissues of the foot, which promotes healing.
5. A soft wrap helps support the foot and minimize swelling. If the wrap feels too tight, loosen it.
6. Over-the-counter pain medications can relieve discomfort associated with an injured foot. Acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen, or naproxen can be taken, depending on individual preference.
7. If you are sent for an X-ray, a report on the X-ray should be called to you within 24 hours from the time you are X-rayed. If you have not heard from your provider within 24 hours, return to the Student Health Center as soon as possible to get the report, or call your provider.
8. If you are not showing progressive, steady improvement over the next three to five days, return to the Student Health Center for a recheck on your foot.
9. If you are having severe pain or an unusual problem, return to the Student Health Center or see your personal/referral doctor *promptly*.
10. Allow *at least* two weeks for the foot to heal before attempting any sports (longer if the activity causes foot discomfort).