CONWAY ORTHOPEDIC & SPORTS MEDICINE CENTER

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Ankle Sprain- Nonoperative

Phase I: Joint Protection and Mobility

Goals:

- Protection and healing of injured tissues
- Manage and eliminate pain and swelling
- Restore symmetrical active and passive range of motion
- Restore normal gait pattern

Weight bearing:

- **Grade I/II**
  - ASO or walking boot for 1-2 weeks per physician discretion.
  - Progress to ambulation in shoe when able to do so pain free
- **Grade III/High ankle sprain**
  - Tall walking boot and crutches 4-6 weeks per physician discretion.
  - 2 crutches > 1 crutch > no crutch when pain free.
  - Progress to ambulation in shoe and ASO

Key Exercises:

- Active and passive ROM
- Open chain theraband exercises when AROM is pain free
- Gait/crutch training
- Cycling (in boot or ASO if appropriate)
- Knee, hip, and core strengthening
- Joint mobilizations

Exercise Precautions:

- **Grade I/II**
  - Avoid overstretching inversion
  - Initiate theraband exercises when AROM is pain free
  - Progress full weight bearing and balance exercises based on pain response
- **Grade III/High ankle sprain**
  - Avoid overpressure with dorsiflexion and external rotation ROM weeks 0-2
  - Follow weight bearing precautions when initiating closed chain exercises utilizing boot or ASO at all times

Criteria to progress to Phase II:

- Full, pain free active and passive ROM
- Full weight bearing, pain free, no assistive device
- Normalized figure 8 measure for edema
- Single leg stance 10 seconds on firm surface

Phase II: Progressive strengthening and Proprioceptive response

Goals:

- Restore balance and proprioceptive response
- Restore symmetrical movement patterns with squatting and lunging
- Initiate sport cord activities

Key Exercises:

- Squatting and lunging with symmetrical movement pattern
- Begin sagittal plane exercises with progression to frontal plane
- Return to running progression as tolerated
- Sport cord activities with focus on frontal plane dynamic control
- Single leg squatting to restore symmetrical LE strength and muscle endurance

Exercise Precautions:

- Avoid activities that cause pain
- Avoid progression if having pain 24 hours after treatment, or if swelling returns
- Avoid progression if patient complains of instability

Criteria to Progress to Phase III:

- Demonstrates proper frontal plane control with sport cord activities
- Demonstrates 1 min of SL squatting pain free
- Demonstrates 10 min jog, symmetrical gait, pain free
- Y balance anterior direction < 4 cm difference to opposite side
- No pain or swelling

Phase III: Return to Sport

Goals:

- Initiate plyometrics
- Pass Return to Sport Test (if appropriate)
- Restore symmetrical strength, power, and speed
- Restore high level dynamic control specific to sport