

York Orthopaedic Department

This is a follow-up letter to your recent telephone consultation with the fracture care team explaining the ongoing management of your injury. Your case has been reviewed by an Orthopaedic Consultant (Bone Specialist) and Fracture Care Physiotherapist.

**You have sustained a soft tissue injury (strain) to your calf muscle (gastrocnemius or soleus).**

**Healing:** This normally takes approximately 6 weeks to heal depending on the severity of the strain.

**Pain and Swelling:** The swelling is often worse at the end of the day and elevating it will help. Take pain killers as prescribed.

**Using your foot:** You may have been given a boot, possibly with heel wedges. It is not needed to aid healing, but it will improve your symptoms. You may walk on the foot as comfort allows. You will find it easier to walk with crutches in the early stages.

**Follow up:** We do not routinely follow up patients with this type of injury. If after six weeks you are:

- still experiencing significant pain and swelling or
- struggling to wean out of the boot

Please do not hesitate to contact us for a further consultation.

If you are worried that you are unable to follow this rehabilitation plan, or have any questions, then please phone the Fracture Care Team for advice.

**Or,** if you are experiencing pain or symptoms, other than at the site of the original injury or surrounding area, please get in touch using the telephone or e-mail details at the bottom of this letter.

**York Virtual Fracture Clinic Contact details:**

**Phone:** 01904 726575

**Scarborough Trauma Assessment and Treatment Unit (TATU):**

**Phone:** 01723 342021 / 07385 463781

**Email:** virtualfractclinic@york.nhs.uk

Please follow the management plan below.

What to expect:

Weeks since injury	Rehabilitation plan
0-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Use boot and/or wedges for comfort, try to stop using them as soon as possible</li> <li>✓ Use the crutches to take some of the weight off of your foot.</li> <li>✓ Perform the exercises below regularly to get your movement back. You can start them straight away.</li> <li>✗ Avoid stretches or resisted exercise for the first 3 weeks.</li> <li>✗ Avoid activity that elicits pain at or near the injured site.</li> </ul>
2-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Try to stop using the boot and to walk without crutches.</li> <li>✓ Start around your house first, then try outside.</li> <li>✓ You may want to wear it if you go on a long walk.</li> <li>✓ Start the exercises below labelled 'Exercises to start after 2 weeks'.</li> </ul>
6 -12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ You can begin to resume normal, day-to-day activities but be guided by any pain you experience.</li> <li>✓ If appropriate, start the 'Advanced exercises for sports rehabilitation' below.</li> <li>✗ Heavy tasks or long walks may still cause some discomfort and swelling.</li> </ul>

Advice for a new injury:

**Cold packs:** A cold pack (ice pack or frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel) can provide short term pain relief. Apply this to the sore area for up to 15 minutes, every few hours ensuring the ice is never in direct contact with the skin.

**Rest and Elevation:** Try to rest the foot for the first 24-72 hours to allow the early stage of healing to begin. Raise your ankle above the level of your hips to reduce swelling. You can use pillows or a stool to keep your foot up.

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**Early movement and exercise:**

**Smoking advice**

Medical evidence suggests that smoking prolongs fracture healing time. In extreme cases it can stop healing altogether. It is important that you consider this information with relation to your recent injury. Stopping smoking during the healing phase of your fracture will help ensure optimal recovery from this injury.

For advice on smoking cessation and local support available, please refer to the following website: <http://smokefree.nhs.uk> or discuss this with your GP.

**Boot advice**

**Diabetic patients:** If you are diabetic please contact us to discuss your boot. This is particularly important if you have problems with your skin. We can provide you with a specialist diabetic boot if required.

**Footwear for your uninjured foot:** We would recommend choosing a supportive shoe or trainer with a firm sole for your uninjured foot. You will notice that the boot you have been given has a thicker sole, by matching this height on the uninjured side you will reduce any stress on your other joints.

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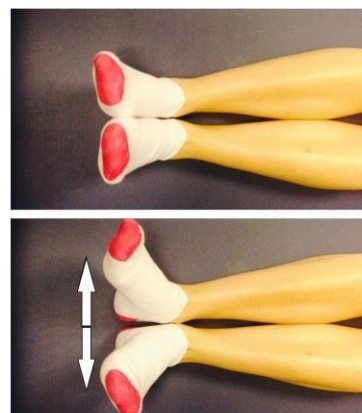
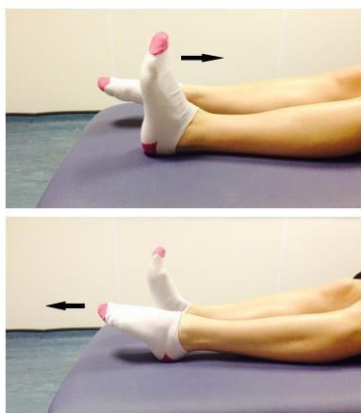
**Email:** [virtualfractclinic@york.nhs.uk](mailto:virtualfractclinic@york.nhs.uk)

## Exercises

### Initial exercises to do 3-4 times a day

**Ankle and foot range of movement exercises. Repeat these 10 times each.**

1. Point your foot up and down within a comfortable range of movement.
2. Make circles with your foot in one direction and then change direction.
3. With your heels together move your toes apart as shown in the picture.



### Exercises from week 2 onwards



#### Re-developing your balance:

**Level 1:** Stand holding onto a chair or firm surface. Practice standing on your previously injured ankle for up to 30 seconds. Once you have achieved this move to level 2.

**Level 2:** Once standing on one leg attempt to release your grip on the chair/ surface and hold for up to 30 seconds. Once you have achieved this move to level 3.

**Level 3:** Once standing freely on one leg without support you can attempt to close your eyes for up to 30 seconds

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### Exercises from week 4 onwards



#### Ankle stretches

Sit with your leg straight out in front of you. Put a towel/bandage around your foot and pull it towards you. Feel a stretch in the back of your calf. Hold this for up to 30 seconds and repeat 3 times.

### Advanced exercises for sports rehabilitation

Once you can easily complete the above balance exercises below are some examples of what you can move onto next.



#### Developing dynamic ankle control required for sports:

**Level 1:** Walk on the spot on a soft surface e.g. a cushion under a mat. Look straight ahead while staying upright.

**Level 2:** Attempt to stand on one leg on the uneven surface holding it for up to 30 seconds using your good leg first

**Level 3:** Attempt level 2 exercises but closing your eyes. Again try the good one first to see how hard it is.

#### Developing core control required for sports:

**Level 1:** Stand with one foot in front of the other, with your hands together. Swing your arms in a figure eight in both directions for 1-2 mins or as able.

**Level 2:** As level 1, but bring your feet so they are touching toe to heel.

**Level 3:** As level 1/2 but with your eyes closed.

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