

MERCY Injury Unit

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PIL -Foot and Toe Injury Advice

What is a soft tissue injury?

The term 'soft tissue' refers to muscles, ligaments and tendons that move and/or support our joints. An injury to these structures is called a 'soft tissue injury'.

What are the symptoms of a soft tissue injury to the Foot and toe?

The most common symptoms include pain, swelling, bruising, heat, stiffness and weakness which can result in reduced function.

How long will it take for a soft tissue injury of the foot and toe to heal?

It can take up to 6 weeks to fully heal.

How is a soft tissue injury of the Foot and toe treated?

Most people will make a full recovery. Early appropriate management of the injury can improve healing times and return to normal activities. Regular over the counter pain medication in the first few days' post injury can help reduce pain and improve movement. Eat 5 portions of Fruit and vegetables every day. Vitamin C helps to reduce pain, inflammation, complications and improve healing!

The principles of **POLICE (Protect ,Optimal Loading , Ice, Compress, Elevate)** are recommended in the early management of foot and toe injuries.

Protect -The foot/Toe needs to be allowed rest to facilitate healing depending on the severity of the injury you may be provided with one or more of the following: crutches ,a semi rigid brace ,a support bandage (Tubigrip) a walking boot or buddy strapping.

If your healthcare provider has applied buddy strapping to your injured toe ensure it is changed at least once every 24 hours, taking care to wash and dry in between the toes. It is important to wear comfortable and protective footwear without heels as your injury is healing.

Ice: Ice therapy can reduce pain and reduce excessive swelling. Apply ice to the injured area for 10 minutes every 2-3 hours. **DO NOT** apply ice directly to the skin. Place at least 2 layers of damp towelling between your skin and the ice.






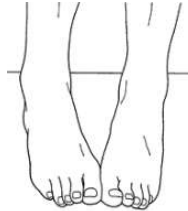
Compression: Applying a compression bandage can reduce excessive swelling assisting the body in clearing out swelling from the injured site. Do not wear the compression bandage at night.

Elevate: Keeping the foot raised will help drain out any swelling from the affected area. Support the foot with a pillow and sit in a comfortable position.

What can I do to help myself recover from a foot and toe injury?

Exercises are a crucial part in the successful return to normal daily activities and sport. Exercises can begin as early as possible and then can increase gradually.

The following exercises should be performed 3 times each day:

<p>Day 1-4 Foot Pumps Lying on your bed or sitting in a chair, alternately point your ankle up and down. Repeat 20 times.</p> 	<p>Ankle Circles: Sitting in chair, rotate your ankle in clockwise and anticlockwise direction. Repeat 20 times.</p> 
<p>Toe scrunching: Put a towel under your foot and try to scrunch it with your toes. Repeat 20 times.</p> 	<p>Passive toe stretching: Sit with your heel on the floor and use your other hand to gently move the injured toe up and down. Repeat 20 times.</p> 
<p>Exercises – Day 4 onwards (if symptoms allow): Complete all exercises twice a day.</p> <p>Calf Stretch: Stand with chair or wall for support. Place the affected leg backwards, keeping knee straight and heel on the ground. Lean forward, feeling a stretch at the back of the lower leg. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 10 times.</p> 	<p>Foot inversion: Sit on a chair and put the inner borders of your feet together. Push them against each other. Hold for 5 seconds. Repeat 10 times .</p> 

When can I return to normal activity /walking ?

Foot/Toe injuries usually take 4-6 weeks to heal fully however you can begin walking as soon as you are able. In fact, the earlier you start to walk the sooner you return to normal activity.

When can I return to running or sport?

Avoid running for at least 2 weeks or until your foot/Toe pain is minimal. Return to sport requires a gradual increase in activity over time. Discuss with a chartered physiotherapist if you have any worries about return to work or play.

**If after 3 weeks, you feel you have not improved then contact your GP or
The Mercy Injury Unit – Gurrabraher 8 am to 6 pm Mon – Sun. Telephone: (021) 4926900**