Every day, 25,000 Americans sprain an ankle and many more suffer an ankle fracture, tendon tear or other injury to that joint. Athletes and dancers, who rely heavily on strong ankles, are even more at risk.

Stay in the Game

An ankle injury can take an athlete or dancer off the field or stage for an entire season. A major one, like a severe sprain, ankle fracture or Achilles rupture, can require surgery and take up to six months to heal. Experts agree that incorporating prevention techniques into workout routines can minimize the risk of ankle injuries.

Midwest Orthopedics at Rush (MOR) and the Illinois Athletic Trainers Association (IATA) have teamed up to promote awareness and prevention of sports-related ankle injuries. Ankles for Life was created to provide essential information to help prevent them from occurring.

Visit www.anklesforlife.org for more information and to order gym bag tags with ankle injury prevention tips.

Basic Tips to Protect Your Ankles

- Practice and play on flat surfaces
- Wear correct footwear and replace shoes often
- When needed, wear orthotic inserts in shoes
- Cross train with cycling or swimming to avoid overuse
- Recover and rest after each work out

Make these ankle injury prevention exercises a part of your routine:

Balance training

1. Balance on one leg:
   Standing tall, balance on one leg for 30 seconds. Repeat on the other side.

2. Balance and catch:
   While balancing on one leg, catch and throw a ball with a partner. Toss the ball to the right, then left, high, then low. Perform three sets and then switch legs.

3. One leg mini squats:
   While balancing on one leg, perform a half squat with the opposite leg stretched out in front of you. Squat up and down 10 times. Then, extend your leg out to the side for 10 repetitions and behind you for 10 repetitions. Repeat three times and then switch legs, following the same order.
**Strengthening**

For each exercise, sit on the ground and place a Theraband around the top of your foot and hold the ends with both hands. Perform three sets of 20 for each of the following:

1. **Inversion:** Move your foot toward the inside while pulling on the band.
2. **Eversion:** Move your foot toward the outside while resisting the band.
3. **Dorsiflexion:** Pull your foot toward your chest while resisting the band.
4. **Plantar Flexion:** Point your toe toward the ground while pulling against the band.

**Stretching**

1. **Peroneal stretching:**
   - The peroneal tendons that run along the outside of the ankle are crucial for strength and support.
   - Gently roll onto the outside of your feet and walk around for 60 seconds. You should feel the stretch along the outside of your ankle.

2. **Achilles stretches:**
   - By stretching the Achilles tendon, which runs vertically along the back of your heel, you can improve its flexibility and avoid injury.
   - While standing, step back with one leg, keeping the back leg straight and the heel down.
   - Push your hips forward while bending the knee of the front leg at about a 45-degree angle. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds and switch legs; repeat with two to four sets on each leg.

**If you are injured, call a foot and ankle specialist:**

Dr. Georges Holmes  
Dr. Simon Lee  
Dr. Johnny Lin  
Dr. Kamran Hamid  

877 MD BONES

Order free gym bag tags for yourself or your team:  
www.anklesforlife.org