

CAUSES AND PREVENTION OF ANKLE INJURY

Introduction

Prevention of injury is better than cure but the following causes of ankle injury can be identified to prevent as well reprevent injury.

Inversion sprains, or inward turning of the foot, account for about 90% of ankle injuries. Everson sprains, or outward turning of the foot, are much rarer.

When looking at the prevention of injury, including ankle injury, one needs to look at the body as a system rather than focus too much on specific body areas.

Some Common Causes of Ankle Injury

1. Lack of Transverses Abdominus activation

The TVA is the deep abdominal muscle which is vital for stability both passively (for posture) and dynamically (for movement). The TVA has connections to many major muscle groups which in turn are connected to virtually all muscle groups throughout the body. The importance of correct TVA function is highlighted from the fact that all movement starts from this muscle. Therefore, if this muscle is not functioning correctly all other muscle groups will not work as effectively. This includes, but is not limited to, the peroneals which are major stabilizers of the ankle joint.

2. Lack of hip flexibility and strength

Inadequate hip internal rotation and excessive hip external rotation can predispose a person to inversion ankle sprains. Lack of strength through the hips can lead to improper knee tracking. This can predispose a person to lower limb alignment problems and ultimately ankle sprains.

3. Calf tightness

When an individual is required to have more movement through this joint than they currently have, compensation occurs in other areas. This compensation can take place at the ankle joint often leading to injury. Remember the golden rule that if one part of the musculoskeletal system is not in symmetry there will be compensation somewhere else.

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4. Foot pronation and supination

This refers to turning inward or outward of the foot upon weight bearing. This is traditionally the area of podiatrists but again it is often over looked that the whole musculoskeletal system also needs to be addressed. Several factors may cause incorrect foot placement including hip, calf and other muscle flexibility and strength issues. More specific to the podiatrists' domain is improper footwear, flat feet or excessive arches. It is therefore still recommended that a podiatrist is sought as part of the holistic plan in verifying the need for orthotics and selection of appropriate footwear.

5. Poor footwear

Footwear needs to be specific to the individual as well as the purpose it is being use for. The best person qualified to select appropriate footwear are podiatrists. Footwear retailers like "The athletes Foot" or "Shoe Science" are the next best options. Stability is obviously an important component of any footwear especially if there is foot pronation/supination issues involved.

Conclusion

If you have had a previous ankle injury (or anywhere else) and want to avoid a reoccurrence, come and see me about corrective exercises and stretches that will help prevent injury from reoccurring.

If you are thinking about seeing a podiatrist or for that matter any other health professionals including physios, doctors, and orthopedic specialists please talk to me first. I know who are better than average.