Ankle Exercises
(Exercises for Rehabilitation Following Injury)

Following ankle injuries *it is* ***as important*** to follow your caregivers instructions for regaining full use of your ankle, as it was to follow the initial treatment plan following the injury. The following are some suggestions for exercises and treatment, which can be done to help you regain full use of your ankle as soon as possible.

- **Follow all instructions** regarding physical therapy.
- **Prior to exercising** it is helpful to use heat on the muscles or joint being exercised as this loosens up the muscles and *tendons* (cord like structure) and decreases chances of injury during your exercises. If this is not possible just begin your exercises slowly at first until you are gradually warmed up.
- Stand on your toes several times per day **to strengthen the calf muscles**. These are the muscles in the back of your leg between the knee and the heel. The cord you can feel just above the heel is the Achilles tendon. Rise up on your toes several times repeating this three to four times per day. **Do not exercise to the point of pain**; if pain starts to develop decrease the exercise until you are comfortable again. This means to decrease the exercise repetitions to a point where no pain is developing.
- **Do range of motion exercises.** This means moving the joint in all directions. Practice pretend writing with your toes or practice the alphabet. Do not increase beyond a range that is comfortable.
- Increase the strength of the muscles in the front of your leg by raising your toes and foot straight up in the air. Repeat this exercise the same as you did the calf exercise with the same warnings. This also stretches out your muscles.
- **Stretch out your calf muscles** also by leaning against a wall with your hands in front of you, and put your feet a few feet from the wall and bend your knees until you feel the muscles in your *calves* (the backs of your legs) become tight.
- **After exercising** it will be helpful to put ice on the ankle or injured site to prevent swelling and improve rehabilitation. This may be done for 15 to 20 minutes following your exercises. If exercising is being done in the work place, this may not always be possible.
- **Taping an ankle injury** may be helpful to give added support following an injury to help support the ankle until full strength is regained. It also may help prevent re-injury. This may be especially true if you are in training or conditioning program. You and your caregiver can decide what the best course of action to follow is.

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