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HOW PHYSICAL THERAPY CAN HELP YOUR ANKLE/ FOOT SPRAIN OR STRAIN

Read more inside on How To Treat A Sprain Or Strain With Physical Therapy,
Exercise of the Month, and Running Gait Analysis!

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HOW PHYSICAL THERAPY CAN HELP YOUR ANKLE/ FOOT SPRAIN OR STRAIN

Have you recently injured your ankle or foot? Do you have persistent pain since spraining your ankle? Knowing the difference between a mild problem that goes away on its own and one that lingers on indefinitely is the job of a physical therapist.

At Amber Hill Therapy Centers, we are committed to helping you get the results you need to resume your life without limits! While many factors can lead to foot and ankle pain, sprains/strains are common examples. Even if your pain subsides, dysfunction may still be present and lead to re-injury or chronic pain.

If you have noticed limited mobility, persistent pain, or balance and gait problems since your injury, Amber Hill Therapy Centers can help. We will determine the type of injury (i.e., a sprain or strain) and provide you with the necessary treatments for healing and tips to avoid re-injury.

Call today to schedule an appointment with one of our highly skilled physical therapists!

What Is The Difference Between A Sprain And Strain?

A sprain happens when a ligament (the tissue that connects one bone) is stretched or torn. Sprains are typically the result of a trauma, a deceleration (slowing down) movement, or a sudden change in direction. The most common symptoms include pain, inflammation, muscle spasm, and sometimes an inability to move the joints where the injury occurred.

Strains occur to a muscle or tendon (the tissue that connects muscle to bone). Strains usually happen when the muscle suddenly contracts, like running, jumping, or repetitive and awkward movements. The symptoms of strains are similar to

those associated with sprains, making them difficult to tell apart without doing a physical therapy examination.

There are three grades of sprains/strains that outline the severity of the injury.

Grade 1:

- Mild pain (Rarely Moderate or severe pain)
- No bruising
- Minimal swelling (sometimes no swelling)
- Tenderness to the touch at the site of the injury

Grade 2:

- Mild to moderate pain (rarely severe pain)
- Some bruising
- Mild to moderate swelling around the injury
- Tenderness to touch on-site and around the injury
- Often painful to put weight on your injured limb

Grade 3:

- Moderate to severe pain
- Significant bruising
- Moderate to severe swelling throughout the limb
- Tenderness to touch at the site and surrounding area of the injury
- Often severe pain or inability to put weight through the injured area

Ligaments are torn (ruptured), and the joint will be loose/unstable from tearing, so it may require surgical intervention or the use of bracing to facilitate healing.

If you are unsure whether you sustained a sprain or strain, our physical therapists can help you figure it out.



HOW TO TREAT A SPRAIN OR STRAIN WITH PHYSICAL THERAPY

Our physical therapists will perform a thorough assessment that includes a detailed history and a hands-on evaluation of the injured area at your initial evaluation. This assessment will help the therapist classify the injury's severity and develop a treatment plan to address your current situation.

Foot and ankle pain treatment depends on where the injury happened and how long ago it occurred. If it is not possible to walk more than two or three steps without pain, it is essential to visit a physical therapist as soon as possible. If the joint looks out of place or has an obvious deformity to the bone, it is crucial to go to the emergency room for an x-ray because a fracture is likely.

The initial stages of physical therapy will focus on restoring any lost motion, reducing the swelling, and using all available treatments to alleviate any pain you may experience. Within a few hours of compression and elevation, most people notice that the swelling begins to subside, and with it, their pain.

Next, we will design a program to restore your proprioception, balance, and strength so you can take on everyday activities. For optimal results, it is best to consult with a physical therapist to see the best methods for healing and avoiding re-injury of the affected area.

Our comprehensive program will also look for any changes in your gait pattern that may make it difficult for you to move around freely. Dysfunctional movement patterns can last for years and lead to re-injury and potentially other injuries.

Our physical therapists will show you therapeutic exercises to address any underlying issue, such as a weakness that may be contributing to altered movement patterns, balance issues, and overall susceptibility to more injuries. People who sprain or strain their feet or ankles often find that they are continuously re-injuring that part of their body. Fortunately, this does not have to be the case with the help of physical therapy.

Call Today To Set Up An Appointment

Whether you sustained a sprain or strain, physical therapy is the answer to achieving long-term relief. Contact Amber Hill Therapy Centers today to schedule a consultation or to find out more about how physical therapy can help relieve your foot and ankle pains!

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**Get Your Life Back with
Amber Hill Therapy Centers!**

*Make an appointment today to start
living your life again, pain-free!*



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Kelly Reichenbaugh PT, DPT, Owner

My name is Kelly Reichenbaugh and I am a physical therapist and part owner of Amber Hill Therapy Centers. I grew up in the area and graduated from Walkersville High. I went on to receive my Bachelor of Science at Duquesne University after which

I worked in basic science research for a few years. Although the research was exciting and interesting, I really wanted to work with people in the healthcare setting. In 2000, I started working for Amber Hill as a PT tech and eventually went on to become the Practice Administrator. The desire to work with people continued, so I returned to school to receive my Doctorate of Physical Therapy from Shenandoah University.

I love being a PT and working with people of all ages to help them overcome their pain and limitations so that they can get back to the things they enjoy. I also like running and take a special interest in working with runners. When I was young, I never liked to run but as I got older I found a connection with it and want to help others enjoy it as much as I do. I became an ACE certified Running Gait Analyst and help runners to return to running after injury, work out pain issues or just become a better runner!

When not working, I enjoy outdoor activities, spending time with family and friends, dining downtown with my husband and running through Baker Park with our dog Stella.



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EXERCISE OF THE MONTH ANKLE ALPHABET

Sit in a chair with good posture. Rest the edge of your heel (of the affected leg/foot) on the floor as shown. Write the letters of the alphabet from A to Z with your big toe.

This exercise helps prevent or relieve shin splints.

RUNNING GAIT ANALYSIS

Running is a great exercise, but it is hard work. It requires strength and mobility throughout the body as well as mental and physical endurance. Without a proper balance, it can put unnecessary forces and impact on the body. Over time, these forces can lead to break down of form and subsequent injury.

Running Gait Analysis is a study of the running process. In RGA, runners go through a comprehensive evaluation to determine where improvements can be made in gait technique and training. Video gait analysis is used to record the entire gait

cycle, from the initial foot strike through to the end of the swing phase. This analysis covers your body movement from top-toe, so it takes into account how the other parts of your body, such as the knees, arms and hips, are moving. There are significant benefits from completing RGA for everyone — from occasional runners to marathon semi-professionals.

RGA can prevent future injuries by correcting your running style and helps to identify muscles that need to get stronger or more flexible and this can lead to a more effective rehabilitation process.

Amber Hill Therapy Centers offers a consultation to identify problems and goals, a functional movement and video



gait analysis, a customized plan of care and a training/retraining protocol by A.C.E. Running Gait Analyst Kelly Reichenbaugh, PT, DPT. **Call 301-271-9230 to schedule your analysis today.**

Your health is our highest priority. Give us a call or visit www.amberhillpt.com today!