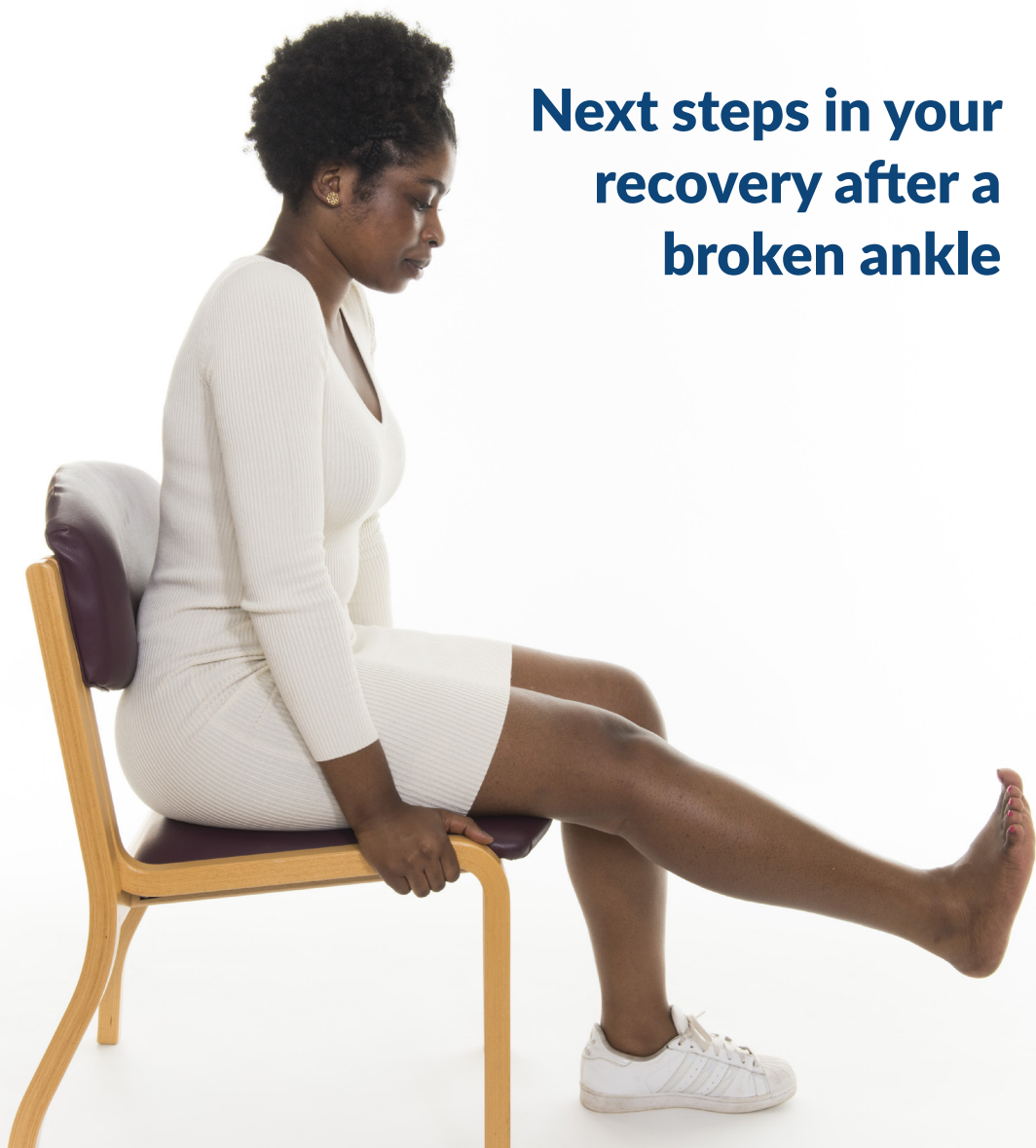


Next steps in your recovery after a broken ankle



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— FRACTURED ANKLE —
MANAGEMENT EVALUATION

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What has happened to my ankle?

You have broken (fractured) your ankle. An ankle fracture is a break of the bone at the lower end of your tibia or fibula, or both of these bones. To help the bones heal you will have had a cast or an operation.

After injury, the ankle can become stiff and the muscles can get weaker. Your balance can also be affected, making you feel a bit unsteady on your feet. For these reasons, exercises are an important part of your treatment.

This booklet will provide you with some advice to start the next stage of your recovery.

Sometimes your clinician will refer you to a physiotherapist for additional exercises and advice. This will be discussed with you during your appointment.



What should I do after my plaster cast or boot is removed?

If you've had a cast or boot on for a few weeks then your skin may be dry. As long as the clinician has said that any wounds you have are ok to get wet, then you should first soak your ankle in warm water for around ten minutes.

Following this, massaging the leg and any surgical scars you have with a non-scented moisturising cream each day is helpful.

If you have a scar from surgery it can become a bit sensitive to touch. Massaging it with different textures can help (for example, different types of clothing material, cotton wool, sponge). This can begin when the scar is healed. The sensitivity should improve gradually but can last for a few months.



What should I do after my plaster cast or boot is removed?

It is very common at this early stage in your recovery to experience swelling around the ankle. To reduce swelling during the day, elevate the foot on a stool or chair when resting. It helps if you can raise and rest your leg on cushions so that your toes are higher than your hips.

If your ankle is very swollen you can sometimes experience blisters that form where the ankle has broken. If this happens you should continue to manage the swelling by raising the leg. It is important that you do not pop the blister as this can increase the risk of infection. The blisters will usually resolve without any further treatment.

If your pain is not being managed very well you can discuss this further with your pharmacist or GP. It is important to manage this early so that you can start to do the early exercises needed to begin your recovery.

To help to reduce the pain you can use ice packs. These must be wrapped in a cloth and not used for more than 20 minutes at a time. Wait an hour before reapplying ice. It is not recommended to use ice packs if you have poor circulation or lack sensation around your ankle unless you have been given advice to do so by a clinician.



Starting to walk

If your clinician has advised you not to put any weight through your broken ankle for a few weeks then doing this for the first time can feel like a big step towards your recovery.

When you first begin to put weight through your ankle your clinician will show you how to do this with walking aids, such as elbow crutches.

Usually you will begin with using two elbow crutches, progressing to one and then none. This gradual process is usually led by you, based on your pain levels and how comfortable you feel.

It is best to practise walking short distances in your own home to begin with. Once you are comfortable with this you can practise walking short distances outside. Finally, you can gradually increase the distances you are walking outside until you are back to your usual distances.



How long will it take to recover?

Your clinician will discuss with you what you can expect and what is achievable in the short and longer term.

In general you should return to all your previous activities. However, you may find that your ankle does not feel as strong as it was before, or remains swollen for many months after the injury. There is also a higher risk of developing future arthritis because of the injury.

In general the following is advised when starting to return to common activities:

- **Driving:** Not recommended until you are able to control the vehicle safely. Your clinician will discuss your particular circumstances and recommendations with you.
- **Lifting/Manual work:** Once you are walking without walking aids and putting your full weight through the ankle, you can begin to return gradually to heavier work duties.
- **Contact sports:** After a broken ankle the bones typically heal quite quickly so you can walk about and put weight through your foot. However, the bones will need to be protected for a bit longer before going back to a contact sport. Your clinician will discuss your particular circumstances and recommendations with you.



Starting your exercises

Starting to do your ankle exercises regularly is very important.

It can be difficult to keep track of what exercises you have done, and to keep motivated to continue doing them. To help we have included an exercise diary at the end of this booklet. Completing this diary can help you see the progress you are making and what you have done each day.

During this early stage it is also very useful to write down your personal goals related to your recovery. There is a guide on how to set your goals on page 29.

An example might be:

'My goal is to be able to walk to the local shop and carry back a bag of shopping within the next six weeks.'

There is a notes' page after the exercise diary for you to have a think about your goals over the next few weeks and months. It is important that you acknowledge when you have achieved them or write down your thoughts and feelings if you do not, re-evaluating and reflecting as you progress through your recovery.



Starting to move the ankle

These exercises are the minimum you will need to do to start moving your ankle and get the best outcome.

To help you keep track of what you have done you will find it helpful to record how many and how often you do these in the 'exercise diary' included in this booklet.

A good starting point is to repeat each exercise ten times and try to do this three times a day. If this is comfortable then try increasing the number of times you repeat the exercise.

As an exercise becomes easier, increase the amount by doing another set of 10 repetitions. Build up further still by adding another set of 10 repetitions when you feel ready and as pain allows.

If you experience more pain than you can manage during or after an exercise, reduce the number of times you are doing the exercise you are finding difficult. You can always try and build up again gradually once the exercise becomes easier to manage.

Exercise One: **Moving the ankle up and down**

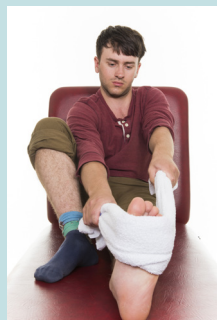
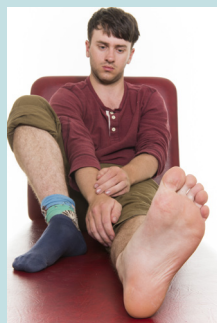
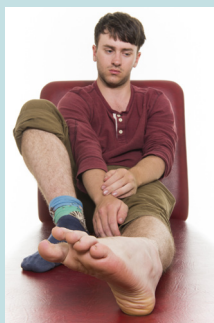
- Start by sitting up, with your affected leg straight out in front of you
- Move your ankle upwards as far as you can and hold for 10 seconds
- If this feels comfortable, you can get a bit more ankle movement upwards by putting a towel around your foot and gently pulling the towel
- Move your ankle downwards as far as you can and hold for 10 seconds
- If this feels comfortable, you can get a bit more ankle movement downwards by using your other foot to gently push the foot down



Starting to move the ankle

Exercise Two: Moving the ankle side to side

- Start by sitting up, with your leg straight out in front of you
- Move your ankle inwards as far as you can and hold for 10 seconds
- Move your ankle outwards as far as you can and hold for 10 seconds
- If this feels comfortable, you can get a bit more ankle movement inwards and outwards by putting a towel around your foot and gently pulling one side of the towel and holding, followed by the other side



Exercise Three: Moving the toes

- Start by sitting on a chair with your foot on the floor with a towel underneath the foot
- Using your toes pull the towel towards you



Please ensure you are wearing supportive footwear or are in bare feet when you do the exercises where you are on your feet.

Starting to move the ankle

Exercise Four: Stretching the muscles in the back of the leg

- Start by standing facing a wall, with your arms outstretched against the wall
 - Place your affected leg behind you, keeping the foot to the floor. **Make sure both feet are facing forwards**
 - Bend your knee on the unaffected side until you can feel a stretch down the back of your affected leg
- (picture below left)
- Hold for 30 seconds
 - Repeat the stretch but this time bend your knee on the affected side as well (picture below right). You should feel the stretch lower down your muscle or in your ankle.
 - Repeat each stretch two (2) more times



Starting to strengthen your ankle

Once you are comfortable with exercises one to four, you can begin to strengthen the muscles around your ankle.

As before, aim to do this in repetitions of ten, three times daily, but reduce

or increase this as pain allows. Don't forget to record your progress in your exercise diary and keep setting short and longer term goals – they will help keep you on track.

Exercise Five: Up onto your toes

- Start by standing in front of a table and place your hands on the table for balance
- Lift your heels off the ground as far as you can manage and hold for 5 seconds
- Slowly lower back down
- To make this more challenging you can repeat just on your affected leg



Starting to strengthen your ankle

Exercise Six: Dips

- Start by standing in front of a table and place your hands on the table for balance
- Slowly begin to bend your knees, keeping your heels on the floor
- Slowly raise back up again
- To make this more challenging you can repeat just on your affected leg



Learning to balance

Improving your balance is vital to prevent any future trips or falls which could injure the ankle again.

Unlike the other exercises in this booklet, it is better to practise balancing regularly during the day.

Aim to practise balancing on at least five occasions during the day but reduce or increase this as pain allows. Some people find it useful to practise after a regular activity such as making a drink.

'At first, have a table in front of you for support until you have built up your confidence.'

The first thing you can do is to practise standing on just one leg (the affected leg) in front of a table for balance.

When you can do this confidently and keep your balance, you may like to try without a table.

Once you can hold this comfortably for 30 seconds you can make it more challenging by repeating with your eyes closed or with your leg on an unstable surface, like a cushion.



What to do if I am concerned

There is always a risk that you may not progress as quickly as you expect, or you experience a change such as sudden increased pain or swelling. If this occurs you can contact your local trauma unit and if it is urgent, visit your Emergency Department.

Because you are taking part in a clinical trial you can also contact your local research team or the main trial team leading this project:

01865 223113



Keep going!

Well done on taking the time to read through this booklet. Keep recording your progress and setting new goals to keep track of your recovery.

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— FRACTURED ANKLE —
MANAGEMENT EVALUATION

Patient Diary

This diary is not being collected by the FAME study, but is to help you manage your exercises. We hope you find it useful.

Every time you complete your exercises, place a tick in the appropriate box.

There is a section for goal setting on page 31 where you can record what you would like to achieve. There is also a notes' page on page 32 for you to record your thoughts and feelings. If you did not manage to complete any exercises that day you can note why.

Here's an example of a diary page, part-completed.

Week Commencing/...../.....	Week 1 to Week 2					
	1. Moving ankle up & down			2. Moving ankle side to side		
Monday	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tuesday	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wednesday	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Thursday	✓	✓	✓			
Friday						
Saturday						
Sunday						

Week Commencing/...../.....	Week 1 to Week 2						
	1. Moving ankle up & down		2. Moving ankle side to side			3. Moving the toes	
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							
Saturday							
Sunday							
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							
Saturday							
Sunday							

Week Commencing/...../.....	Week 1 to Week 2						
	4. Stretching back of leg			5. Up on your toes			6. Dips
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							
Saturday							
Sunday							
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							
Saturday							
Sunday							

Week Commencing/...../.....	Week 3 to Week 4						
	1. Moving ankle up & down			2. Moving ankle side to side			3. Moving the toes
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							
Saturday							
Sunday							
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							
Saturday							
Sunday							

Week Commencing/...../.....	Week 3 to Week 4									
	4. Stretching back of leg			5. Up on your toes			6. Dips			
Monday										
Tuesday										
Wednesday										
Thursday										
Friday										
Saturday										
Sunday										
Monday										
Tuesday										
Wednesday										
Thursday										
Friday										
Saturday										
Sunday										

Week Commencing/...../.....	Week 5 to Week 6						
	1. Moving ankle up & down			2. Moving ankle side to side			3. Moving the toes
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							
Saturday							
Sunday							
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							
Saturday							
Sunday							

Week Commencing/...../.....	Week 5 to Week 6									
	4. Stretching back of leg			5. Up on your toes			6. Dips			
Monday										
Tuesday										
Wednesday										
Thursday										
Friday										
Saturday										
Sunday										
Monday										
Tuesday										
Wednesday										
Thursday										
Friday										
Saturday										
Sunday										

Week Commencing/...../.....	Week 7 to Week 8						
	1. Moving ankle up & down		2. Moving ankle side to side			3. Moving the toes	
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							
Saturday							
Sunday							
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							
Saturday							
Sunday							

Week Commencing/...../.....	Week 7 to Week 8						
	4. Stretching back of leg			5. Up on your toes			6. Dips
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							
Saturday							
Sunday							
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							
Saturday							
Sunday							

Week Commencing/...../.....	Week 9 to Week 10						
	1. Moving ankle up & down		2. Moving ankle side to side			3. Moving the toes	
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							
Saturday							
Sunday							
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							
Saturday							
Sunday							

Week Commencing/...../.....	Week 9 to Week 10									
	4. Stretching back of leg			5. Up on your toes			6. Dips			
Monday										
Tuesday										
Wednesday										
Thursday										
Friday										
Saturday										
Sunday										
Monday										
Tuesday										
Wednesday										
Thursday										
Friday										
Saturday										
Sunday										

Week Commencing/...../.....	Week 11 to Week 12						
	1. Moving ankle up & down			2. Moving ankle side to side			3. Moving the toes
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							
Saturday							
Sunday							
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							
Saturday							
Sunday							

Week Commencing/...../.....	Week 11 to Week 12									
	4. Stretching back of leg			5. Up on your toes			6. Dips			
Monday										
Tuesday										
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Saturday										
Sunday										

Guide to setting SMART goals

To help you achieve your goals, you should make sure they are:

Specific **Measurable** **Achievable** **Relevant** **Timely**

Specific: A clear and specific goal would be “Over the next week, I will walk 15 minutes to the local shop and back three times a week.” An unclear goal would be ‘getting fit’. To make your goal more specific, ask yourself questions such as: What am I going to do? How am I going to do it? Where am I going to do it? When am I going to do it? Who am I going to do it with?

Measurable: Making the goal specific means that it should be easy to measure whether you have achieved it. The example above, “Over the next week, I will walk 15 minutes to the local shop and back three times.” is measurable. You can record the number of times you walked to the shop in one week, and how long it took you to walk there and back. It would be hard to measure a vague goal like ‘getting fit’.

Achievable: Set goals that are within your reach. It is important to make the first goal quite easy to achieve. Building on small successes is the best way to achieve your longer-term goals.

Relevant: Is the goal relevant and important to you? Is there a clear link between your goal and your ankle injury recovery?

Timely: Set short-term goals that you can achieve in the next few weeks. If the goal requires a longer time frame, decide whether there are any shorter-term goals that you could achieve to help you build up to achieving your longer-term goal.

Examples of SMART goals:

Short term:

I will walk my dog around the block three times this week.

I will go to the gym twice this week and do ten minutes each on the treadmill, exercise bike and cross trainer.

I will walk to the local shop and carry back a bag of shopping within the next 4 weeks.

Long term:

I will return to light duties at work by six weeks and progress to full duties by 4 months.

I will play my football tournament in 4 months.

I will ride my bicycle to take my children to school at the start of the next school term.

Designing shorter-term goals to help you achieve your longer-term goals:

Long term goal: I will play my football tournament in 4 months.

Shorter term goals to achieve this:

1. **I will** run around the block twice a day by 2 weeks.
2. **I will** start change of direction running by 4 weeks.
3. **I will** kick a ball around with my friends by 6 weeks.
4. **I will** return to light training at 8 weeks and full training by 10 weeks.

My goals

Short term

Long term

Notes

This is a space for you to acknowledge when you have achieved your goals or write down your thoughts and feelings if you do not, re-evaluating and reflecting as you progress through your recovery.



For further information please visit or contact:

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