

Ankle and foot pain can be both bothersome and limiting, affecting your mobility and daily life. Up to 50% of people will experience pain in their ankle or feet in their lifetime. These issues can arise from various causes, including injuries, overuse, or underlying medical conditions. This handout aims to provide you with essential information about ankle and foot pain and how to effectively manage it.

### **Common Causes of Ankle and Foot Pain:**

- Sprains and Strains: Overstretching or tearing of ligaments and tendons in the ankle or foot.
- Plantar Fasciitis: Inflammation of the plantar fascia, causing heel and arch pain.
- Achilles Tendonitis: Inflammation of the Achilles tendon at the back of the heel.
- Fractures: Broken bones in the ankle, foot, or toes, often due to injury.
- Bunions: Abnormal bony bumps at the base of the big toe.
- Neuropathy: Nerve damage or compression that leads to pain or numbness.
- Arthritis: Conditions like osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis can affect the ankle and foot joints.
- Flat Feet: Low arches or no arches can cause foot pain and overpronation.
- Overuse: Repetitive activities or excessive walking or running can strain the feet.

### **Symptoms:**

- Pain in the ankle, heel, arch, or various parts of the foot
- Swelling, redness, or tenderness
- Stiffness and limited range of motion
- Numbness, tingling, or burning sensations
- Difficulty bearing weight on the affected foot

### **Prevention and Management:**

- Rest: Avoid activities that worsen the pain and allow your ankle or foot to heal.
- Ice: Apply ice to the affected area to reduce swelling and inflammation.
- Compression: Use a compression bandage to provide support and reduce swelling.
- Elevation: Elevate your leg when resting to minimise swelling.
- Orthotics: Customised shoe inserts can help correct foot alignment.
- Proper Footwear: Choose shoes that provide good arch support and cushioning.
- Exercise: Strengthen and stretch the calf and foot muscles to improve flexibility.
- Pain Medication: Over-the-counter pain relievers or prescription medications may be necessary.
- Weight Management: Excess weight can strain the feet, so maintain a healthy weight.

### **When to Seek Professional Help:**

If you experience any of the following, it is recommended you consult a healthcare professional:

- Severe or persistent pain
- Inability to bear weight on the affected foot
- Signs of infection (redness, warmth, fever)
- Numbness, tingling, or weakness in the foot or toes

### **Treatment Options:**

- Physiotherapy: Customised exercises and techniques to improve foot and ankle strength and mobility.
- Medications: Pain relievers, anti-inflammatories, or muscle relaxants as prescribed.
- Injections: Corticosteroid injections can reduce inflammation and pain.
- Surgery: For severe cases, such as fractures, advanced arthritis, or deformities.