Staying active while recovering from a foot or ankle injury

A foot or ankle injury doesn't have to sideline you from physical activity completely. After you talk with your doctor, these tips can help you stay active while you heal.

- Take a break from the activity that caused the injury. A stress fracture, for example, takes six to eight weeks to heal. For ankle sprains, healing usually takes four to six weeks. But severe sprains may take longer.
- Keep up on aerobic fitness with nonweight-bearing exercise. Try swimming or deep-water running with a flotation device. Using a combination arm and leg cycle or stepper is another option. You can continue upper body strength training in a seated position, including some core exercises.
- Take your time getting back into weight-bearing exercise. Alternate it with deepwater running and plenty of rest days. Ask your doctor or physical therapist about light-intensity activities you can do.
- Make plans for more cross-training once your injury heals completely. Varying the types of activities you do can help you avoid a repeat injury. For example, alternate jogging with swimming or cycling.

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