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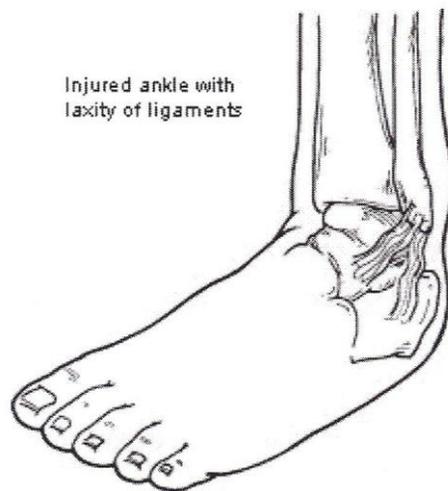
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## **Chronic Ankle Instability**

Chronic ankle instability is a condition characterized by a recurring “giving way” of the outer (lateral) side of the ankle. This condition often develops after repeated ankle sprains. Usually the “giving way” occurs while walking or doing other activities, but it can also happen when you’re just standing. Many athletes, as well as others, suffer from chronic ankle instability.



**What Causes It?** Chronic ankle instability usually develops following an ankle sprain that has not adequately healed or was not rehabilitated completely. When you sprain your ankle, the connective tissues (ligaments) are stretched or torn. The ability to balance is often affected. Proper rehabilitation is needed to strengthen the muscles around the ankle and “retrain” the tissues within the ankle that affect balance.

Repeated ankle sprains often cause and perpetuate chronic ankle instability. Having an ankle that gives way increases your chances of spraining your ankle repeatedly. Each subsequent sprain leads to further weakening (or stretching) of the ligaments resulting in greater instability and the likelihood of developing additional problems in the ankle.

## Treatment Options

Non-surgical treatment may include:

**Physical therapy.** Physical therapy involves various treatments and exercises to strengthen the ankle, improve balance and range of motion, and retrain your muscles. As you progress through rehabilitation, you may also receive training that relates specifically to your activities or sport.

**Bracing.** Some patients wear an ankle brace to gain support for the ankle and keep the ankle from turning. Bracing also helps prevent additional ankle sprains.

**Medications.** Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen, may be prescribed to reduce pain and inflammation.

In some cases, our doctors will recommend surgery based on the degree of instability or lack of response to non-surgical approaches. Surgical options mainly involve repair or reconstruction of the damaged ligament(s). However, other soft tissue or bone procedures may be necessary depending on the severity of your condition and whether you have other problems in the foot or ankle. The length of the recovery period will vary, depending on the procedure or procedures performed.

