Common Athletic Injuries of the Ankle
Common Injuries of the Ankle in Athletes

- Ankle Sprains
- Chronic Lateral Ankle Instability
- Peroneal Tendon Injuries
- Achilles Tendon Tears
Ankle Sprains
What’s an Ankle Sprain?

- An injury to one or more ligaments in the ankle

Ligaments

- Connect two bones and hold a joint together
- 3 lateral ligaments in the ankle give you stability
- Medial ligaments also help stabilize the ankle
- In an ankle sprain, ligament(s) are either stretched or torn
Some Sprains Are Worse Than Others

Less Severe
- Stretched
- Partially Torn
- Completely Torn

More Severe
- More Ligaments Injured or Fractured
Symptoms of a Sprained Ankle

- Pain or soreness
- Swelling
- Bruising
- Difficulty walking
- Stiffness in the joint
What Should You Do?

- Seek prompt medical attention
  - Follow-up with a specialist—a foot and ankle surgeon
  - Ice, elevate and rest!
Treatment for Ankle Sprains

- Splinting or casting
- Rest, ice, compression
- Medication
- Physical therapy
- More severe cases may require surgery to repair the ligament(s).
Chronic Lateral Ankle Instability
What’s Chronic Ankle Instability?

- A “giving way” of the outer side of the ankle
- This “giving way” can lead to an ankle sprain
- Often caused by having previous sprains
Proper Rehabilitation Can Help Prevent This Condition . . . and Future Sprains

- Proper rehabilitation (physical therapy):
  - Strengthens foot and ankle muscles
  - “Retrains” the ankle for better balance
Signs and Symptoms of Chronic Ankle Instability

- Ankle feels wobbly
- A repeated turning of the ankle
- Chronic swelling and discomfort
- Pain or tenderness
Treatment for Chronic Ankle Instability

- Non-surgical treatment
  - Physical therapy
  - Bracing
  - Medications
- Surgery
  - Repair or reconstruction of damaged ligament(s)
Peroneal Tendon Injuries

- Acute (sudden) tears
- Subluxation
The Peroneal Tendons

- Two tendons behind the outer ankle bone
- Stabilize the foot
- Protect against sprains
The Symptoms of a Peroneal Tendon Tear

- Pain
- Swelling
- Weakness of the foot and ankle
- With time, the foot shape may change
Subluxation of the Peroneal Tendon(s)

- One or both tendons slip out of position
- Can occur after trauma, such as a sprained ankle
- Early treatment is a must!
Symptoms of a Peroneal Tendon Subluxation

- A snapping feeling of the tendon around the ankle bone
- Sporadic pain behind the outside ankle bone
- Ankle instability or weakness!
Treatment for Peroneal Tendon Injuries

- Splinting or casting
- Oral or injected medications
- Physical therapy
- Bracing
- In some cases, surgery is necessary
Achilles Tendon Tears
The Achilles Tendon: The “Heel Cord”

- Runs down the back of the low leg
- Connects the calf muscle to the heel bone
- Helps to raise the heel off the ground
What Causes an Achilles Tendon Tear?

- Can be a complete tear or partial tear
- Occurs when the tendon is stretched too much
- Can occur with jumping, pivoting, sudden accelerations in running
- Common among “weekend warriors”
Symptoms of an Achilles Tendon Tear

- Sudden pain
- Pain may then subside to a dull ache
- Popping or snapping sensation
- Swelling
- Difficult to walk (especially upstairs or uphill) and difficult to rise on toes
Treatment Options for an Achilles Tendon Tear

- **Non-surgical treatment**
  - Higher likelihood of re-tearing the tendon
  - Wearing a cast, walking boot, or brace

- **Surgery**
  - Lower likelihood of re-tearing the tendon
  - May increase push-off strength
  - May improve muscle function and ankle movement
For Ankle Injuries, Seek Prompt Medical Attention

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