



## REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

# Grade III Lateral Ankle Sprain

by Amol Saxena, DPM, FACFAS

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

This protocol for Grade III Lateral Ankle Sprain is designed to provide the rehabilitation professional with a general guideline for patient care with the AlterG Anti-Gravity Treadmill. As such, it should be stressed that this is only a protocol and should not be a substitute for professional clinical decision-making regarding a patient's progression. Progression should be individualized based upon each patient's specific needs, pain level, physical examination, functional progress, and presence of any complications.

### FREQUENCY

2x week (Daily treatment may be beneficial for collegiate or professional athletes).

### PRECAUTIONS AND CONTRAINDICATIONS

- Increasing pain in the foot or ankle
- Persistent edema/effusion
- Numbness or paresthesia to ankle, foot, toes

### PHASE I (IMMEDIATE)

#### Week 1 - Week 3

##### Goals:

- Reduce edema & pain
- Protection of ligamentous structures

##### Treatment Options:

- Non-wt bearing X 3 wks
- Compression dressing 1st week with posterior splint followed by boot for weeks 2 and 3

##### Modalities:

- Rest
- Ice
- Ice Compression (Ex: Game Ready® or Cryo-Cuff®)
- Electrical stimulation
- Elevation

##### Manual Therapy:

- Gentle effleurage/retrograde massage
- Gentle dorsiflexion, NO Inversion or Eversion

##### Therapeutic Exercise:

- Stationary bike

##### Gait Training:

- [AlterG Anti-Gravity Treadmill](#)
  - Walking with boot in AlterG @ 50% BW

### PHASE II (EARLY POST-OPERATIVE PHASE)

#### Week 4 - Week 6

Initiate outpatient Physical Therapy

### PHASE II (EARLY POST-OPERATIVE PHASE) (cont.)

##### Goals:

- Begin weight-bearing as tolerated (WBAT) in boot, with progression to out of boot

##### Treatment Options:

###### Modalities:

- Continue with ice compression, elevation, e-stim

###### Manual Therapy:

- Begin passive ROM, with protected inversion
- Continue massage for soft-tissue restrictions

###### Therapeutic Exercise:

- Active ROM with Thera-band® or similar elastic tubing
- Begin proprioceptive re-training
- Gentle Closed-Kinetic Chain activities can begin, using AlterG first, then overground when patient tolerates Full Weightbearing
  - Squats
  - Step-Ups
  - Shuttle Leg Press
  - Steamboats

###### Gait Training:

- Progress to full weight bearing in the boot
- Discontinue the boot when painfree (usually 4-6 weeks)
- Use ankle brace/tape for outside activity
- [AlterG Anti-Gravity Treadmill](#)
  - Can weight bear in AlterG at 3 - 6 weeks at 50% - 85% BW
  - Can initiate single-legged strengthening in AlterG
  - Can start ambulating without boot, 0° incline at 3 mph - 6 mph

### PHASE III (INTERMEDIATE PHASE)

#### Week 7 - Week 12

##### Goals:

- Painfree with activities of daily living
- Progress with sports and recreational activities (first linear and then lateral)
- Taping/bracing can be used during functional training, but therapeutic exercises should be performed without support

##### Treatment Options:

###### Modalities:

- Continue as above
- Can add pulsed ultrasound if adhesed capsule or posterior impingement is present

###### Manual Therapy:

- Improve ROM with advanced mobilization techniques
- Manual resistance to ankle through range, straight

###### Therapeutic Exercise:

- Progress functional rehab, closed-kinetic strength, and proprioception