

Grading of a Lateral Ankle Sprain

Overview:

A lateral ankle sprain may be graded based on the degree of damage to the ligaments. This can help separate athletes with minor injuries from those with more significant ones.

Presentation: Edema and bruising over the lateral aspect of the affected ankle.

Usual cause: Landing with the body weight on the foot with the foot plantar flexed and internally rotated. Stretching of the ankle ligaments occurs as the foot rolls inward. This injury may occur if a player steps or lands on another player's foot or an uneven surface.

Ligaments potentially involved:

(1) anterior talofibular (ATFL): most commonly injured

(2) calcanofibular (CFL): next most injured

(3) posterior talofibular (PTFL)

Extent of Injury to the Anterior Talofibular Ligament	Extent of Injury to the Calcanofibular Ligament	Extent of Injury to the Posterior Talofibular Ligament	Grade
stretched with some fibers torn	may be stretched	may be stretched	I
significant disruption	partial tear	may be stretched	II
complete tear	complete tear	possible disruption	III

Test Finding	Implication
positive anterior drawer	ATFL disrupted
positive talar tilt	CFL disrupted

References:

Jackson MD Moeller JL Hough DO. Chapter 76: Basketball injuries. pages 558 – 570 (page 559). IN: Sallis RE Massimino F (editors). ACSM's Essentials of Sports Medicine. Mosby. 1997.