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ankle is one of the most important joints in your body. It plays a crucial role in movement, stability, and locomotion to keep you moving forward. One of the most critical ways to protect the ankle and keep it healthy is by performing strengthening exercises. The stronger that the ankle is, the less likely someone is to fall, sustain an ankle sprain, and have an improvement in your athletic performance. Ankle strengthening exercises are essential for keeping this joint stable and healthy. In this article, we will discuss the best ankle strengthening exercises and how to perform them correctly. We will also look at the anatomy of the ankle to understand why these exercises are so important and answer many of the frequently asked questions about strengthening the ankles. Anatomy Review of the Ankle The ankle is a hinge joint made up of three bones: the Tibia, Fibula, and Talus. The Tibia and Fibula are the two long bones in your lower leg, while the Talus sits on top of the ankle and acts as a pivot point. These bones are connected by ligaments, otherwise known as Plantarflexion. On each side of the ankle is a group of muscles and tendons that control the side-to-side stability of the ankle. These muscles groups prevent the ankle from rolling, as many people know with ankle sprains. These muscles on the sides of the ankle also help with the stability of the foot's arch. The most well-known muscles in these groups are the Tibialis Posterior and the Peroneals. The group of muscles on the front of the leg or shin help pull the toes and the foot up off the ground. These muscles stabilize the front of the ankle and also help with the stability of the foot's arch. Now that we've reviewed the ankle anatomy, let's look at the research on why ankle strengthening is essential for everyone. Why is Ankle Strengthening Important? There are four main reasons why ankle strengthening is so significant. First, strong ankles can help to prevent falls and ankle sprains. Second, ankle strengthening can help improve your balance and proprioception (your ability to feel where your body is in space). Third, stronger ankles can improve performance in sports and other physical activities. And finally, ankle strengthening can help prevent injuries to other body parts, such as the knees, hips, and back. One of the most important reasons to perform ankle strengthening exercises is to prevent ankle sprains and other ankle-related injuries. Ankle sprains are one of the most common injuries, particularly in sports. It's estimated that ankle sprains account for 16-40% of all sports-related injuries. A study by Gribble et al. looked at the ankle injury rates in a group of high school athletes. They found that the ankle injury rate was significantly lower in those who performed ankle strengthening exercises than those who did not. Another study by Di Fabio et al. looked at ankle strengthening exercises in older adults. They found that ankle strengthening exercises were effective in reducing the risk of falls in older adults. Falls are a leading cause of injury in adults aged 65 and older. In fact, in the United States, more than 30 million people aged 65 and older fall each year. Falls are the leading cause of hip fractures in this age group. Several factors can contribute to falling, such as muscle weakness, balance problems, and poor vision. However, one of the most critical risk factors for falling is ankle weakness. A study looked at a group of older adults and found that those with weaker ankles were more likely to fall than those with stronger ankles. Another study by Maki et al. found similar results; they found that ankle strength was a significant predictor of falling in a group of older adults. These studies show that ankle strengthening exercises can help to reduce the risk of falls in older adults. This is likely because these exercises improve ankle strength, balance, and proprioception. Proprioception is your ability to feel where your body is in space. If your ankles have poor proprioception, it increases your falling chances. Ankle strengthening exercises can help to improve balance and proprioception. A study by Shumway-Cook et al. found that ankle strengthening exercises improved balance in a group of older adults. Another study by Di Fabio et al. found that ankle strengthening exercises improved proprioception in a group of healthy adults. These studies show that ankle strengthening exercises can help to improve balance and proprioception. This is likely because these exercises improve strength and challenge the nervous system and your internal balance systems. Stronger ankles lead to faster sprinting, higher jumping, and an overall improvement in landing mechanics. Another study found that ankle strengthening exercises improved agility and speed in athletes. Ankle strengthening exercises can also help to improve your performance in other physical activities. For example, if you want to be able to sprint faster or jump higher, then ankle strengthening exercises can help. The ankle joint is the closest joint to the ground and produces the large forces needed for athletic performance. Our Favorite Exercises for Stronger Ankles Now that we know the benefits of ankle strengthening exercises, let's look at some of our favorite and most effective exercises to improve strength, balance, and proprioception. We will provide a list of exercises with detailed instructions on how to perform them correctly. We will also provide a list of exercises that can be done at home with minimal equipment. Ankle Dorsiflexion: Sit with your leg extended in front of you. Place a resistance band around your foot and pull the band away from your foot, keeping your knee straight. Ankle Inversion: Sit with your leg extended to the side. Place a resistance band around your foot and ankle and pull the band towards the other leg, keeping your knee straight. Ankle Eversion: Sit with your leg extended to the side. Place a resistance band around your foot and ankle and pull the band away from your foot, keeping your knee straight. These are just a few examples of resistance exercises that can be done to strengthen the ankle. Many other exercises can be done with a resistance band; these are listed in the appendix. Balance Exercises: Balance is a crucial component of ankle strength and stability. There are many exercises that can be done to improve balance. Some of the most effective balance exercises are: Single-Leg Stand: Stand on one leg with your arms at your sides. Hold this position for 30 seconds and then switch legs. Single-Leg Squat: Stand on one leg with your arms at your sides. Lower your body into a squat position and then return to the starting position. Repeat this exercise for 30 seconds and then switch legs. Single-Leg Squat on a Foam Balance Pad: A foam balance pad is an excellent tool to use to challenge your balance and also as a cushion for kneeling or other activities. To learn more about a home foam balance pad, check out the link below. The Best Therapy Foam Balance Pad. These are just a few examples of balance exercises that can be done to improve balance. Many other activities can be done to challenge your balance, but this is plenty to get you started on improving your balance. For related topics, check out the blog articles listed below. Proprioception Exercises: The third type of ankle strengthening exercise is proprioception exercises. These exercises challenge your balance and help to improve proprioception. There are many exercises that can be done to improve proprioception. Some of the most effective proprioception exercises are: Single-Leg Balance with Head Turns: Stand on one leg with your arms at your sides. Slowly turn your head side to side while holding this position for 30 seconds, and then repeat the exercise. Single-Leg Balance with Arm Raises: Stand on one leg with your arms at your sides. Slowly raise your arms overhead and then lower them back down. Repeat this exercise for 30 seconds and then switch legs. BOSU Ball Ankle Rolls: Place a BOSU ball on the ground and stand on it with both feet. Slowly roll the BOSU ball in different directions while maintaining your balance. Repeat this exercise for 30 seconds and then switch legs. Single-Leg Stand on a Foam Balance Pad: A foam balance pad is an excellent tool to use to challenge your balance and also as a cushion for kneeling or other activities. To learn more about a home foam balance pad, check out the link below. The Best Therapy Foam Balance Pad. These are just a few examples of balance exercises that can be done to improve balance. 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graduallyConsult an Expert: To find the best ankle rehabilitation exercises for you, I recommend working with a qualified physiotherapist. A physiotherapist can determine the ideal ankle rehab program for you to ensure the best outcome.Use Ankle Rehab Tools: Use resistance bands and balance tools for an added challenge. Resistance bands are excellent tools for ankle recovery, which is why we incorporate them in many of our ankle rehabilitation exercises.Stay Consistent: Incorporate these exercises into a daily routine for lasting benefitsFollow a Structured Plan: If recovering from an injury, follow a structured rehab plan. View Physio Pros Ankle Rehabilitation Guide for expert structured rehabilitation resources and support. Ankle Support During SportsVarious tools and methods can provide additional ankle support during sports or activity. This added stability can help enhance performance and guard against injury.Common ankle support tools include taping, strapping,and braces. Our in-depth post on strapping a sprained ankle covers the benefits of taping a sprained ankle and how to do it correctly. Read our post here: How To Tape Your Ankle and check out our range of physiotherapy related products.Along with physio tape, we carry Therabands and other ankle strengthening products and tools here: Products Physio Pro. If you would like personalised product advice, our team would be happy to chat with you. Perth Ankle Rehabilitation Tailored to Your Needs and GoalsStrong ankles are vital for injury prevention, balance, sports performance, and mobility.Performing the right ankle exercises on a consistent basis can help keep your ankles strong and reduce your chance of injury.View our ankle rehabilitation page for more guided resources or contact us to book an appointment.

Balance exercises for ankle stability. How to strengthen ankles for balance. Balansoefeningen. How do i strengthen my ankles for balance. Balance ankle exercises. How to strengthen feet for balance.