



Musculoskeletal

Return to sport after ankle sprains

...what is the international consensus on the best practices

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Despite being the most common traumatic injury in sports, there is still a lack of established criteria-based guidelines for return to sport (RTS) after injury. This may contribute to the high recurrence rate of ankle sprains and promote early/ inadequate RTS.

A three-round Delphi survey approach was taken, including 155 multidisciplinary professionals, to identify their agreement on whether or not assessment items should be included in the RTS decision after an acute lateral ankle sprain. A consensus was achieved when there was a >70 percent agreement.

Five domains were found relevant in the RTS process after an ankle sprain:

1. Pain (during sports or the previous 24 h);
2. Ankle impairments (range of motion; muscle strength, endurance, and power);
3. Athlete perception (perceived confidence, stability, readiness);
4. Sensorimotor control (proprioception, dynamic balance); and
5. Sport performance (hopping/ jumping, agility, sport-specific activity, full training).



Altogether these were coined "the PAASS framework". The framework was developed to inform clinicians on what is (and isn't) important for RTS clearance after an ankle sprain.

Nevertheless, the authors stress that this panel did not evaluate the measures that may be used to assess each domain. Moreover, individual- and sport-specific factors should also be taken into consideration.

Expert opinion

Considering how common it is, everyone working in the sports or musculoskeletal fields has probably been faced with an ankle sprain. This makes it even more surprising that there is still a lack of established criteria for the return to sport after such an injury.

As stated by the authors, an inadequate return to sport may contribute to the high recurrence rate of these injuries, and it is common for ankle impairments to worsen after each recurrence. Therefore, any prevented index injury or recurrence has a great impact on participation.

This consensus statement follows on previous ones for other conditions and identifies useful domains to consider in the return to sports decision. Moreover, the full text is free to access, which makes it a must on everyone's reference folder.

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