



Every worksite has hazards that come with the work being done. The leg is often the part of the body that takes most of the workload and therefore is susceptible to injury. In the leg there are some of the largest and most durable muscles and tendons in the body. Muscles and tendons are the connective tissues that attach to our bone structure and allow us to work, play, and move freely.

The three parts of the leg that get injured the most are:

- Knee,
- Achilles tendon,
- Ankle.

Common Ways of Injuring the Leg

- Getting on and off equipment, such as trucks, heavy machinery, and ladders.
Falling off equipment.
Not using three points of contact.
- Getting crushed or pinched by equipment.
- Planting the foot and getting it caught so the foot cannot move with the rest of the leg.
- Slipping on wet or slippery surfaces.
- Tripping due to tripping hazards or poor housekeeping.
- Wearing the wrong type of footwear or footwear that has worn out.
This can cause the ligaments and muscles in the leg to be out of alignment.
- Sitting for long periods of time.

How to Treat Sprains

A sprain is damage to the ligament. It varies from simply stretched or slightly torn to completely torn. In many cases you can first use the RICE method to treat a sprain injury:

Rest – You may need to use crutches until you can walk without pain.

Ice – For at least the first 24 to 72 hours or until the swelling goes down, apply an ice pack for 10 to 20 minutes every hour or two during the day. Always keep a thin cloth between the ice and your skin and press the ice pack firmly against all the curves of the affected area.

Compression – An elastic compression wrap, such as a tensor bandage, will help reduce swelling. You wear it for the first 24 to 36 hours. Compression wraps do not offer protection, so you will also need a brace to protect your ankle if you try to put weight on it.

Elevation – Raise your ankle above the level of your heart for 2 to 3 hours a day if possible. This helps to reduce swelling and bruising.

If you push yourself too much before your muscle tendon injury fully heals, you could get injured again and the pain could become a long-lasting problem.

Preventing Leg Injuries

The following tips may prevent leg injuries:

- **Stretch** before and after physical exercise or work activities to warm up your muscles.
- Use the correct techniques or positions during activities so that you do not strain your muscles.
- Use equipment appropriate to your size, strength, and ability. Avoid repeated movements that can cause injury (repetitive strain injury).

- **Do not carry objects that are too heavy.** Use a step stool. Do not stand on chairs or other unsteady objects.
- When working, wear the correct footwear that is made for the job you are doing.
- Maintain good housekeeping and keep travel ways clear of trip hazards.
- Be aware of your surroundings and other equipment on the worksite. Keep a safe distance from, and be mindful of, all hazards on the worksite.