



ANTERIOR ANKLE IMPINGEMENT





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Cause

A condition where pain is experienced in the front of the ankle due to the compression of bony and soft tissues. In dancing this is relatively common as a large number of movements force the ankle into maximal dorsiflexion such as that of a demi plie. With repetitive dorsiflexion, the bones of the ankle joint may not glide as smoothly across one another, causing soft tissues to swell, leading to compression and an impinged sensation.

Anterior ankle impingement can occur for a number of reasons. Most commonly this is due to poor technique and foot control, when landing in a demi plie, repeatedly in allegro. Previous injury to the ankle such as inversion sprains can lead to scar tissue which can also lead to impingement at the front of the ankle. Biomechanics and gait can also play a role in the development of anterior ankle impingement including excessive pronation and 'rolling in' of the feet when walking. In rare cases the impingement may be of a genetic origin, leading to a 'bony block'. This is where the bones themselves are shaped in a way that do not permit movement past a certain point.

Symptoms

Pain is often experienced when performing movements in maximal dorsiflexion. It will often feel like a compressed or blocked feeling leading to a reduced range of movement. Pain can be localised to the touch and in some cases tenderness and swelling can be seen at the front of the ankle.

- Feeling restricted in your plie depth
- Finding it hard to lower your heels when jumping
- Deep tension in the foot in front of the heel bone
- Stiffness in your arch
- Inability to absorb shock when landing jumps
- Discomfort around the front of the ankle joint



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Treatment

Treatment for anterior ankle impingement will vary depending on the severity of the case, however if a diagnosis is made quickly this will often greatly reduce the recovery time. Treatment options can include:

- Soft tissue release including massage and mobilisation
- Taping
- Orthotics
- Correcting technique
- Corticosteroid injections
- Surgery

Treatment will usually involve a series of the above methods. A personalised training plan to keep you dancing where possible and allow for conditioning work to continue to get you back to your pre-injured state as soon as possible will also be tailored by our dance podiatrists.