

Peroneal Tendon Subluxation

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Introduction

The peroneals are two muscles and their tendons that attach along the outer edge of the lower leg. The peroneal tendons are enclosed in a fibrous tunnel that runs behind the outside ankle bone (the lateral malleolus). Damage or injury to the structures that form and support this tunnel may lead to a condition in which the peroneal tendons snap out of place. This condition is called peroneal tendon subluxation.

This guide will help you understand

- how peroneal tendon subluxation happens
- how doctors diagnose the condition
- what can be done to treat this problem

Anatomy

What part of the ankle is involved?

The primary muscles supporting the lateral (outer) part of the ankle are the peroneals. These two muscles and their tendons lie along the outside of the lower leg bone (fibula) and cross behind the lateral malleolus (the outside ankle bone).

The tendons of the peroneal muscles pass together through a groove behind the lateral malleolus. The tendons are kept within the groove by a sheath that forms a tunnel around the tendons. The surface of this sheath is reinforced by a band of ligament called a retinaculum. Contracting the peroneals makes the tendons glide in the groove like a pulley. This pulley action points the foot downward (plantarflexion) and outward (eversion).

Related Document: A Patient's Guide to Ankle Anatomy

Causes

Why do I have this problem?

Tendons attach muscles to bone. Tightening a muscle puts tension on the tendon, which can move bone. Many tendons in the body are held in place by supportive connective tissue, such as a ligament or retinaculum. If the supportive tissue has been damaged or injured, the tendon may be free to slip out of its normal position. This is called subluxation. When the subluxed tendon slips back into place, this is called relocating. A tendon that forcefully snaps out of position and can't relocate has dislocated.

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