

## PREVENTING LATERAL ANKLE SPRAINS

Lateral ankle sprains are the most common soccer injury in the lower extremity. A lateral ankle sprain occurs when ligaments that support the ankle stretch beyond their limits and tear. The severity of an ankle sprain can vary greatly depending on the number of ligaments and the extent to which the ligaments are torn.



During a lateral ankle sprain the foot goes through an excessive amount of inversion. If the tension limits of the ligaments are exceeded, a tear occurs



## **How do you prevent lateral ankle sprains?**

There are multiple strategies you can implement to help prevent ankle sprains including”

- Stretching the ankle muscles
- Strengthening the ankle muscles
- Balance

### **Stretching the ankle muscles**

Tight calf muscles are a risk factor for lateral ankle sprains. There are two principles you need to apply when stretching your calf muscles.

Soccer is an upright sport so stretching should be performed in an upright position

Soccer is played in multiple directions so stretching should be performed in multiple directions

### **Strengthening ankle muscles**

Weak ankle muscles are a risk factor for lateral ankle sprains. During an ankle sprain the foot goes through an excessive amount of inversion.

Therefore, we know that strengthening the ankle evertors play a role in preventing ankle sprains

### **Balance**

Poor balance is considered a risk factor for ankle sprains.

Studies have shown that individuals with poor balance are more likely to sprain their ankles compared to those with better balance.

Soccer is an upright sport so balance exercises should be performed in an upright position

Soccer is played in multiple directions so balance exercises should be performed in multiple directions