

sprains & strains

Sprains occur when ligaments (tough bands of tissue that connect one bone to another) are stretched or torn, and can vary in severity.

SYMPTOMS:

- + **MILD:** (Excessive stretching or a slight tear of the ligament). Small amount of swelling and tenderness, but it's possible to put weight on the joint.
- + **MODERATE:** (The ligament fibers tear, but are not completely ruptured). Joint is tender, painful and difficult to move, swollen, possibly discolored from bleeding, and unsteady when weight is put on the joint.
- + **SEVERE:** (One or more ligaments tear completely). The joint won't move normally or hold weight. Very swollen, possibly discolored. May be difficult to distinguish from fracture or dislocation.

Visit a doctor if there is a popping sound at the time of injury, considerable swelling, or if the injured joint cannot bear weight because of instability or pain. If the sprain is severe, then inadequate or delayed treatment may cause long-term joint or tissue damage.

TREATMENT:

Strains occur when muscles or tendons stretch or tear. They are common in the hamstrings and in back injuries. Symptoms of strains include: pain, stiffness, swelling, and bruising.

Visit a doctor if the area becomes swollen quickly, is intensely painful, if a ruptured muscle or broken bone is suspected, or if the pain, swelling, and stiffness of less severe strains doesn't improve in two to three days.