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Research Article

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[The epidemiology, evaluation, and assessment of lateral ankle sprains in athletes](#)

Approximately 30,000 ankle injuries occur every day in the United States. With the incidence estimated at more than 3 million a year and at a rate of 2.15/1,000 in the U.S. alone, medical specialists and other healthcare providers caring for the foot and ankle must take notice. Despite the millions of ankle injuries sustained annually, the true incidence may be underestimated, as fewer than half of individuals with ankle sprains seek medical attention from healthcare professionals. The economic burden associated with the evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment is close to \$4 billion annually. Ankle sprains account for half of all sports injuries and remains a difficult diagnostic and therapeutic challenge in the athlete. Accurate diagnosis is critical as 40% of ankle sprains are misdiagnosed or poorly treated leading to chronic ankle pain and disability. Implementing evidence supported diagnostic and treatment strategies is the goal for ensuring safe and rapid return to play.

The Lateral Ankle Sprain (LAS) is among the most common type of ankle sprains suffered during athletic activities. Up to 80% of LAS are of the inversion type, and 75% lead to recurrence and instability. Although most individuals experiencing a LAS return to activity within six weeks, many report continued pain, diminished function, and instability.

The purpose of this review is to highlight the epidemiology, pathoetiology, pathoanatomy, and biomechanics of the LAS, enabling sports physicians to implement the best practice guidelines and protocols to manage this common enigma.
