**Sprained ankle? Don't see a physio: Rest, painkiller and ice found to be as good as seeing a specialist in treating the injury**

* **Researchers tracked 503 patients with ankle sprain injuries in hospital**
* **Half were given physiotherapy sessions and half told to rest and use ice**
* **The participants were aged 16 to 79 and were interviewed months apart**
* **Experts found little clinical difference between people who underwent regular physiotherapy sessions, and those who simply used ice and rest**

By [Ben Spencer Medical Correspondent For The Daily Mail](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/search.html?s=&authornamef=Ben+Spencer+Medical+Correspondent+For+The+Daily+Mail)

**PUBLISHED:** 02:01, 17 November 2016 | **UPDATED:** 14:39, 17 November 2016

Physiotherapy for a sprained ankle is no better than resting at home, a study suggests.

Experts found little clinical difference between people who underwent regular physiotherapy sessions, and those who simply used ice, painkillers and rest.

Canadian researchers tracked 503 patients with mild or moderate ankle sprain injuries at two hospitals in Kingston, Canada.

Half of patients were given a series of seven physiotherapy sessions, lasting half an hour each.

The other half were told to go home and advised to rest their ankle, elevate their leg, put a bandage on and treat with ice and painkillers.

The participants, who were aged 16 to 79, were interviewed at one month, three months and six months.

The results, published last night in the British Medical Journal, showed very little difference between the groups at six months.

The researchers, from Queen’s University in Kingston, found that 43 per cent of those who underwent physiotherapy and 38 per cent who simply rested not fully recovered after six months.

Ankle sprains are one of the most common musculoskeletal injuries, the researchers said, and many people return to hospital time after time.

Most ankle sprains are simple ligament sprains - for which physiotherapy is not proven to work, they said.

The authors wrote: ‘Our trial is the largest randomised controlled trial to have evaluated the therapeutic benefits of supervised physiotherapy in the treatment of acute ankle sprains.

‘We conclude ... the addition of early supervised physiotherapy to usual care does not lead to clinically important improvements in functional recovery.

‘Our finding is clinically important as the recommendation of physiotherapy for the management of acute ankle sprains comes with substantial economic costs.’

The authors said alternative treatments should be investigated, rather than simply ploughing on with a treatment that does not work.

In a linked editorial, Chris Bleakley from Ulster University called for patients, practitioners and researchers to consider other rehabilitative exercises that can influence treatment success.

But he said the maximum of seven lots of 30 minutes of supervised physiotherapy in the study might be too low.

For decades doctors have attempted to come up with more and more treatments for orthopaedic problems.

But a growing body of evidence suggests many treatments are of no measureable benefit – and some actually do more harm than good.

A major investigation into the keyhole knee operations carried out on thousands of middle-aged people earlier this year reported that they often do not benefit the patient.

And a study of patients who had undergone hip replacements reported last month that they did not improve mobility.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-3944240/Sprained-ankle-Don-t-physio-Rest-painkiller-ice-good-seeing-specialist-treating-injury.html#ixzz4W17XGUeC>   
Follow us: [@MailOnline on Twitter](http://ec.tynt.com/b/rw?id=bBOTTqvd0r3Pooab7jrHcU&u=MailOnline) | [DailyMail on Facebook](http://ec.tynt.com/b/rf?id=bBOTTqvd0r3Pooab7jrHcU&u=DailyMail" \t "_blank)