

Dancer's Fracture

(Avulsion Fracture of the 5th Metatarsal Base)

How and What?

- Dancer's fractures occur when the ankle is rolled to the inside (Figure 1) often after the person steps on uneven terrain or lands awkwardly from a height.
- The mechanism is similar to that which causes an ankle sprain
- Pain, and swelling in the outside mid-portion of the foot are the main symptoms.
- The injury occurs when a strong ligament pulls a fragment of the 5th metatarsal bone off (the base of the bone that the little toe is attached to).

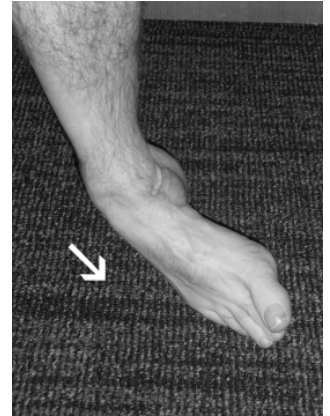


Figure 1:
Mechanism of Injury

Symptoms

Dancer's Fractures cause marked pain and swelling in the outside and mid-part of the foot (Figure 2). Individuals will have great difficulty bearing weight on the injured extremity and if they can walk at all it will usually be with a marked limp.

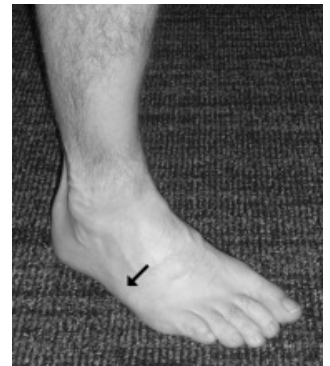


Figure 2:
Main area of Pain

X-Rays

X-rays of the foot will demonstrate a fracture at the base of the 5th metatarsal (Figure 3)

Recovery

Dancer's Fractures can be a frustrating injury as recovery can be prolonged. A typical recovery includes:

- 3-6 weeks of relative immobilization in a cast boot. This may include a period of non-weight bearing for comfort, then walking as symptoms permit in the boot.
- After 4-8 weeks walking in a stiff-soled shoe is permitted.
- For most patients 75% of the recovery will occur in the first 10 weeks, but a full recovery often takes 6-12 months

Treatment

- Initial treatment includes R.I.C.E. (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation) and immobilization in a cast or cast boot
- Weight-bearing is limited until adequate fracture healing has occurred
- Surgery is usually not required except if the fracture is significantly displaced, or the fracture fails to heal (non-union).



Figure 3: Dancer's
fracture X-Ray