

**Mr Stephen Milner** DM FRCS (Tr & Orth)  
Consultant Trauma, Orthopaedic and Foot & Ankle Surgeon  
Email: [steve.milner@nhs.net](mailto:steve.milner@nhs.net)

Secretary: Marilyn Wayman  
01332 783057 (direct dial)  
Email: [marilyn.wayman@derbyhospitals.nhs.uk](mailto:marilyn.wayman@derbyhospitals.nhs.uk)

# OS10lite Ankle Fracture Surgery

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This document will give you information about ankle fracture surgery. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

### What is an ankle fracture?

An ankle fracture is a break of one of or both the ankle bones.

An ankle fracture is usually caused by a twisting injury to the ankle, resulting from sport or a simple fall or trip. There may be a break of the bone on the outer side of the ankle (fibula), the inner side (tibia), or both sides (see figure 1). There may also be damage to the ankle ligaments.

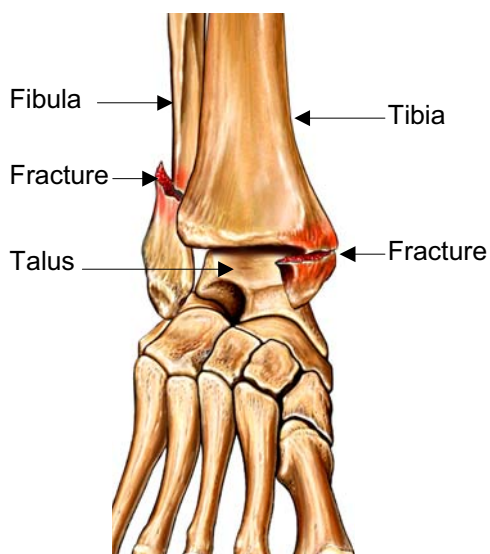


Figure 1

Fracture of both bones of the right ankle

### What are the benefits of surgery?

An operation will make sure that the bones heal in a good position. If the bones heal in an incorrect position, you are more likely to get problems with your ankle in the future.

### Are there any alternatives to surgery?

If your ankle bones are in a good position, it may be possible to treat the fracture using a plaster cast.

### What does the operation involve?

A variety of anaesthetic techniques is possible. The operation usually takes between half an hour and an hour.

Your surgeon will make one or more cuts to expose the broken bones. They will usually fix the fractures using screws and a plate.

## What complications can happen?

### 1 General complications

- Pain
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Unsightly scarring
- Blood clots
- Difficulty passing urine

### 2 Specific complications

- Damage to nerves
- Severe pain, stiffness and loss of use of the foot and ankle (complex regional pain syndrome)
- Loosening or breaking of the plate and screws
- Infection in the bone
- Delayed union

### How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home after one to three days. However, your doctor may recommend that you stay a little longer.

For most of the time during the first couple of weeks you will need to keep your leg raised to keep the swelling down.

Your ankle may be kept in a plaster cast until the bones have healed, which usually takes about six weeks.

It can take several months before you are able to return to all your normal activities.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, you should ask a member of the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

Most people make a good recovery after surgery and get back good function. However, your ankle may never be quite as strong as it was before the injury.

### Summary

For some types of ankle fracture, an operation is the best way to make sure the ankle bones heal in the correct position.

## Acknowledgements

Author: Mr Stephen Milner DM FRCS (Tr. & Orth.)  
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