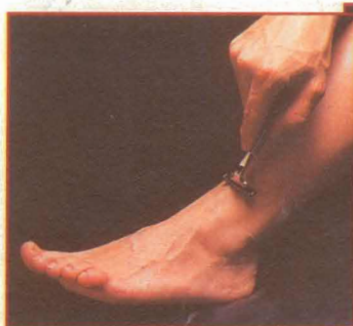


Guardian ankles

How to tape your feet like a pro

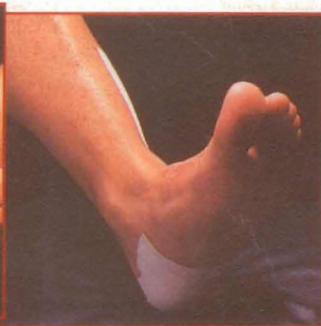
If you twist your ankle, your first step should be to apply a bag of ice wrapped in a towel to the injury. A good second step would be to tape the ankle to keep it stable and help the ligaments heal, says Richard T. Braver, D.P.M., a sports podiatrist in Englewood, New Jersey. He suggests you apply this wrap about 24 hours after the injury. It will keep your ankle from moving sideways but allow it to flex up and down, which will help reduce swelling. The wrap is also a good preventive measure for men who suffer recurrent ankle sprains, because it keeps your foot from rolling to the side. Here's how to tape your left foot using 1½-inch-wide athletic tape (do the opposite for your right):



1. Unless you enjoy ripping the tiny hairs out of your skin, shave your leg from your ankle to just below your calf muscle.



2. Apply three "J straps" by wrapping 18-inch strips of tape from the inside of the foot, under the heel and to the calf.



3. View of overlapping J straps from the other side of the foot. The straps help pull torn or weak ligaments together.



4. Apply three additional straps to the opposite side of the foot, wrapping under the heel and up the inside of the ankle.



5. Stick the end of the roll of tape on top of your foot. Wrap down at a slight angle, bringing the tape under your arch.



6. Wrap the tape low over the back of the heel to avoid pinching the Achilles tendon. (This is called the heel lock.)



7. Continue wrapping tape around the heel and up toward the top of the foot. Tape over the end you started with and cut.



8. Repeat steps 5 to 7, taping in the opposite direction (that is, starting on the outside of the foot), finishing as shown.



9. Finish by wrapping the ankle with an elastic bandage to hold the tape in place and reduce swelling.

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