

# Lateral Malleolus Fracture - A Comprehensive Guide



Fractures could occur anywhere and at any time, but the cause and severity are different. We all are prone to breaking our bones while playing, lifting heavy objects, or even while doing daily activities. The cause and extent of the injury decide where the fracture will occur and how serious it will be. If the break is severe, trauma implants and [orthopedic surgical instruments](#) will be used to stabilize it and ensure that the bones are in their correct alignment.

Depending upon the location and pattern of the break, fractures can be classified into different types. One of the fractures that we are going to discuss in this post is the lateral malleolus fracture that occurs in the ankle.

## What is Lateral Malleolus Fracture?

Each of our ankles comprises two bony prominences, one on either side. The one present on the inner part of the ankle is known as medial malleolus whereas, the one that is there on the outside is lateral malleolus. So, the break occurring on the bump present on the outside part is called lateral malleolus fracture. Twisting or rolling of the foot is the commonest reason for lateral malleolus fracture while it could also occur due to many other causes.

Fractures of the ankle are common, and in most cases, lateral malleolus is involved. An awkward or unusual step taken by the person could also result in a lateral malleolus break.

It is noticed that most lateral malleolus fractures are stable. This means that the fractured bone does not get displaced from its position. Thus, surgery is not often required for the fixation of this condition.

Serious cases may show unstable ankle fractures, and those conditions might require surgical intervention.

### **What Are the Symptoms Seen in Lateral Malleolus Fractures?**

The symptoms experienced may vary depending upon the severity and extent of the break. Besides this, if any other bone present in the ankle is affected, other complications around the affected area may also be seen.

Pain around the ankle is always evident when lateral malleolus breaks, and it could be severe. In the case of serious ankle injuries, pain in other areas will also be felt. Other common symptoms noticed in these types of fractures include swelling and bruising.

If along with pain and swelling on the outside part of the ankle, they are also noticed on the inner side, this is an indication of bimalleolar equivalent fracture. This condition may require surgery for the treatment.

### **How is Diagnosis of Lateral Malleolus Fracture Done?**

During the diagnosis, it is important to identify the seriousness of the condition and check whether the ankle is unstable. For this, the diagnosis is often made with a physical examination. Here, the doctor looks for visible signs like deformity around the ankle, swelling, bruising, and tenderness to touch.

Imaging tests may also be required to confirm the severity and exact location of the fracture.

### **How Are Lateral Malleolus Fractures Treated?**

Stable malleolus fractures don't require surgery for the treatment, as the condition can be relieved using non-operative procedures. The methods used may include:

#### **Ice Application**

Applying ice on the injured ankle may relieve pain and swelling.

#### **Elevate Ankle**

Elevating the ankle above the heart by lying down may minimize swelling.

#### **Medication**

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs are also prescribed to control pain & swelling.

#### **Immobilization of the Ankle**

Rest or immobilization of the injured ankle is critical for better outcomes. During treatment, it is advised not to put any weight on the affected ankle.

These above-mentioned methods are highly effective to treat stable or isolated fractures of the lateral malleolus.

When it comes to the treatment of unstable ankle fractures, the chances of complications are there if correct treatment is not provided. In such cases, if the bone does not heal properly or at its correct position, ankle arthritis may be on the cards.

In some cases of stable lateral malleolus fractures, the doctor may suggest the use of walking boots, walking casts, or ankle braces.

Before recommending surgery, the surgeon looks into all the associated complications, and he/she will also discuss that with the patient.

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