

# ARTHROSCOPIC TREATMENT OF ANTEROLATERAL SOFT TISSUE IMPINGEMENT OF THE ANKLE

## **Thesis**

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## **Abstract**

Anterior soft-tissue impingement, or anterolateral impingement of the ankle, is believed to be caused by one or more inversion injuries to the ankle joint. The pain is usually anterolateral and persists despite adequate rest, healing, and rehabilitation. An inversion sprain may result in posttraumatic synovitis with synovial thickening and effusion. The term “meniscoid lesion” has been used to describe entrapment of a mass of hyalinized tissue between the talus and the fibula during ankle motion.

Injured ankle ligaments will form scar tissue while healing. This scar tissue is tighter, and less organized when patients have their joint completely immobilized. The ligaments heal with tissue that is the appropriate length and of better quality when ankle movement is initiated earlier. When the ligaments scar excessively, normal movements can become painful, and the ankle can be prone to re-injury.

### **Key Words:**

Anatomy, Pathology, Examination and Diagnosis,

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAM	Accessory anteromedial
AC	Accessory anterolateral
ACL	Anterior cruciate ligament
ADL	Activities of daily living
AITFL	Anterior inferior tibio fibular ligament
AL	Anterolateral
AM	Anteromedial
AP	Antero posterior
ATFL	Anterior talo fibular ligament
CC	Cubic centimeter
CFL	Calconeo fibular ligament
CT	Computed tomography
FHL	Flexor hallucis longus
LTM	Lateral trans malleolar
MRI	Magnetic resonance imaging
MTM	Medial trans malleolar
NASIDs	Non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs
PL	Postero lateral
PM	Postero medial
ROM	Range of motion
SPN	Superficial peroneal nerve
TAT	Trans Achilles tendon
3D	Three dimensional

# LIST OF TABLES

<i>Table No.</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Page</i>
1.	Objective and subjective ankle assessment scale	62
2.	Ankle impingement score	63
3.	Scoring systems used to assess results	64
4.	According to Ferkel scoring system every patient was evaluated and a score was given	
5.	Pain Score	91
6.	Swelling Score	92
7.	Post-operative results according to Ferkel et al	92
8.	Postoperative total score was compared to the preoperative one	93
9.	Patients score	94
10.	Meislin's score	95

# LIST OF FIGURES

<i>Figure No.</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Page</i>
1.	a. Anterior surface anatomy of the right ankle with the anterior portals marked. b. Diagrammatic anatomy and anterior portals	4 4
2.	a. Posterior ankle portals b. Diagrammatic anatomy and posterior portals	5 5
3.	a. Lateral Tendons of ankle b. Medial Tendons of ankle	9 10
4.	Medial and lateral ligaments of the ankle	11
5.	Intraarticular dissection of the left ankle.	14
6.	Arrow points to the medial talomalleolar plica below the origin of the transverse ligament.	14
7.	Arthroscopic view of the posterior plica and underlying transverse tibiofibular ligament of the left ankle.	15
8.	Sagittal section of ankle.	16
9.	Anterior view of osseous structures of the right ankle.	17
10.	Superficial dissection of the anterior left ankle.	19
11.	Anterior compartment, medial view. The probe is in the AM portal	20
12.	Anterocentral compartment viewed from the AL portal	20
13.	Arthroscopic view of the posterocentral and posteromedial left ankle with a torn posterior capsule.	21
14.	Arthroscopic view of the posterolateral compartment.	21
15.	Right ankle with arthroscope in the AL portal trans-illuminating the position of the saphenous vein prior to establishing the AM portal	22

<b><i>Figure No.</i></b>	<b><i>Title</i></b>	<b><i>Page</i></b>
16.	Arthroscopic image from the anteromedial portal shows the anterior tibiofibular ligament (ATFL).	22
17.	Positioning for use of the PL portal in the right ankle.	24
18.	Right ankle with a lateral invasive distraction device. Arthroscope is in the AL portal; probe is in the AM portal	27
19.	Noninvasive distraction for ankle	28
20.	Anterior soft tissue impingement sites.	20
21.	Sequence of pain following lateral ankle sprain	30
22.	Anterior view of ankle ligaments	32
23.	Meniscoid lesion of the ankle.	34
24.	Anterior soft tissue impingement of the ankle	35
25.	Syndesmotic Ankle Sprains	36
26.	T2-weighted axial image reveals the normal anterior talofibular ligament	45
27.	Acute tear of the anterior tibiofibular ligament.	45
28.	a. A T2-weighted axial image reveals a thickened anterior talofibular ligament b. A T2-weighted axial image reveals the characteristic low signal intensity soft-tissue thickening	46 46
29.	The T2-weighted axial image reveals edema and laxity along the course of the anterior talofibular ligament	47
30.	Limit immobilization	53
31.	Wobble board	55
32.	Non weight bearing towel stretches	55
33.	Shoe gear modification	56
34.	Corticosteroid infiltration	57



<b><i>Figure No.</i></b>	<b><i>Title</i></b>	<b><i>Page</i></b>
35.	Arthroscopic debridement of the inflamed synovium and inflamed capsular and ligamentous tissue	60
36.	Fistula formation following ankle arthroscopy	68
37.	Age incidence in years	71
38.	Sex Incidence	72
39.	Side affected	72
40.	Previous injury	73
41.	Atheletic participation	74
42.	Duration of symptoms	75
43.	Physiotherapy	76
44.	Previous local corticosteroid injection	76
45.	Previous ankle arthroscopy	77
46.	Plain x-rays (AP & Lateral)	80
47.	MRI of the ankle: showing anterolateral synovial thickening and joint effusion	80
48.	MRI of the ankle: showing anterolateral synovial thickening and joint effusion (Coronal view)	81
49.	Non invasive traction	86
50.	Correct intra-articular needle placement	87
51.	The anteromedial and anterolateral working portals	87
52.	Extensive synovial proliferation in the anterolateral ankle gutter	88
53.	Partial synovectomy was done	89
54.	A probe was used to assess talar chondromalacia	89
55.	Swelling on the antrolateral ankle	99

<b><i>Figure No.</i></b>	<b><i>Title</i></b>	<b><i>Page</i></b>
56.	X-rays were scrutinized to exclude any abnormality	100
57.	MRI showed antero-lateral synovial thickening and joint effusion	101
58.	This meniscoid lesion was removed arthroscopically.	102
59.	X-rays were done to exclude any associated morbidity.	104
60.	Arthroscopy revealed marked synovitis	104
61.	Debridement was done using the shaver	104
62.	Non invasive distraction	105
63.	a) Chronic synovitis, (b) after removal with shaver	106

# CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
INTRODUCTION AND AIM OF THE WORK .....	1
REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....	3
PATIENTS AND METHODS .....	71
RESULTS .....	90
DISCUSSION .....	107
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION .....	115
REFERENCES .....	118
ARABIC SUMMARY .....	

# INTRODUCTION

The first arthroscopic inspection of a cadaveric joint was apparently performed in Japan by *Takagi* in 1918. In 1939, he reported on an arthroscopic examination of an ankle joint. In New York, in 1931, *Burman* reported an experimental study on the arthroscopic exploration of cadaveric joints, but he believed that the ankle joint was unsuitable for such techniques because it was too narrow and a posterior puncture was not feasible.

In 1985 *Chen* described the operative anatomy of the ankle on the basis of his experience with sixty-seven arthroscopies of that joint. Subsequently, major technological advances in video cameras, fiberoptic light transmission, instruments for use in small joints, and distraction of the joint by invasive and non-invasive means, combined with a sound knowledge of safe anatomical portals, have resulted in an improved ability to perform diagnostic and operative arthroscopy in the ankle (*Ferkel, 1999*).

Arthroscopic examination of the ankle joint permits direct visualization and palpation of all intra articular structures, without the morbidity of extensive surgical exposure. Dynamic correlations of the mechanisms of injury, is also possible by viewing the joint in motion and under applied stress intra operatively. The chondral surfaces and soft tissue structures, including, synovium, ligaments and capsule, can be directly assessed. Small joint arthroscopic

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instrumentation enables the surgeon to perform numerous surgical procedures (*Cerulli et al 1992*).

Ankle arthroscopy has evolved to become an important tool in the treatment of several types of ankle disorders.

# Anatomy

## **A. GROSS ANATOMY**

Familiarity with surface anatomy and soft tissue structures of the ankle is imperative if complications are to be avoided during arthroscopy. Neurovascular structures and tendons are at risk if portals are improperly placed. This chapter reviews the topical anatomy as it pertains to arthroscopic approaches.

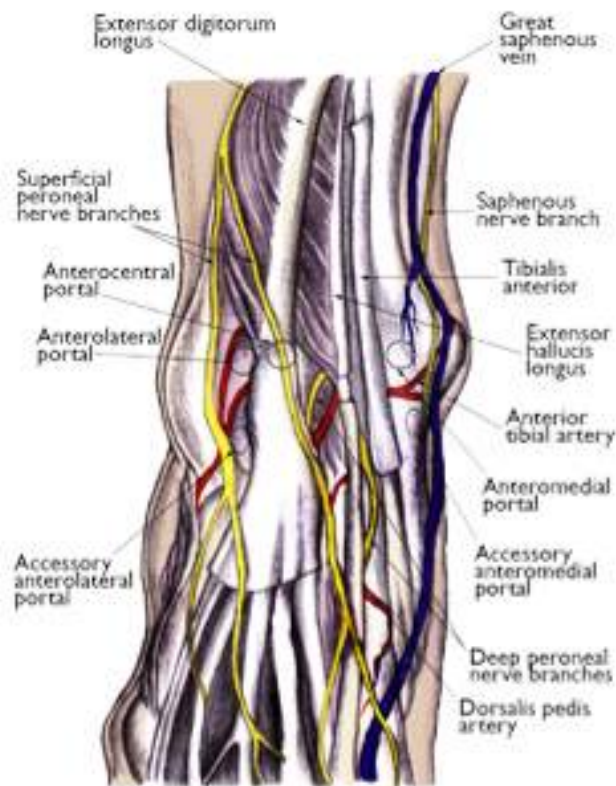
The neurovascular structures, tendons, ligaments, and plicae of the ankle are then reviewed (*Mason and Morgan, 2004*).

### ***1. Surface Anatomy of the Ankle***

The anterior joint line is superficial and palpable, being separated from skin only by the subcutaneous layer, extensor tendons, anterior neurovascular structures, and the anterior capsule. The lateral aspect of the anterior joint line is found just lateral to the peroneus tertius tendon and just above the palpable lateral trochlear ridge of the talus. The medial side of the joint is identified by palpating the soft spot just medial to the anterior tibial tendon and inferior to the proximal corner of the medial malleolus (Figs.1a, b). In contrast, the posterior tibiotalar joint is not easily palpated owing to 3–4 cm of thick fibro adipose tissue located between the Achilles tendon and the flexor tendons of the foot. (*Mason and Morgan 2004*)



**Fig. 1a:** Anterior surface anatomy of the right ankle with the anterior portals marked.  
(*Mason and Morgan 2004*)



**Fig 1b:** Diagrammatic anatomy and anterior portals.  
(*Mason and Morgan 2004*)