

# Dr. Colin Gage

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*"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"*

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## Got a Sprain or a Strain?

### What is the difference between a sprain and a strain?

Did you know that there is a difference between a "sprain" and a "strain"? Many people use these words interchangeably but there is actually a difference between the two.

A "sprain" is an injury to a ligament. A ligament is a thick, tough, fibrous tissue that connects bones together. The most commonly injured ligaments are in the ankle, knee, and wrist. The purpose of having ligaments is to hold your bones in a normal alignment. When a joint and its associated ligaments are stretched open too far or in the wrong direction, the ligaments can be stretched or torn. This injury is called a "sprain". Sprains are commonly graded according to the extent of the injury. Grade I and grade II ankle sprains can usually be treated conservative treatment. Grade III sprains can place individuals at higher risk for permanent joint instability, and an operation may be a necessary part of treatment

A "strain" is an injury to a muscle or tendon. Muscles move your skeleton in an amazing variety of ways. When a muscle contracts it pulls on a tendon, which is in turn connected to your bones. Muscles are made to stretch, but if stretched too far, or if stretched while contracting, an injury called a "strain" may result. A strain can either be a stretching or a tear of the muscle or tendon.

### What activities are common causes of these injuries?

Many sports place participants at risk for sprains and strains; these include football, basketball, gymnastics, volleyball, and many others. These injuries also often occur in normal everyday activities such as a slip on ice, a fall on your wrist, or jamming a finger. Repetitive activities may also cause a sprain or strain.

While not all sprains and strains can be prevented, a few helpful tips can help you avoid this nuisance of an injury:

Stretch before you workout

Wear proper footwear for the activity  
Warm up properly before activities  
Do not run on icy or uneven surfaces

Most sprains and strains respond to conservative treatment. Chiropractors are highly trained to diagnose and follow through with a treatment plan that will allow the injured area to heal naturally and completely. If you have any further questions, feel free to contact me at my office.