

Lateral Collateral Ligament Injuries
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A common injury that occurs while snowboarding is an ankle injury. Typically, pain and swelling is on the outside of the ankle joint, the bone is called the fibula. Most times this injury occurs when the snowboarder is “catching air”, landing on an edge and then rolling with the board.

What happens with a snowboard is that there is a lack of a lock which is commonly found on ski boots and the ankle turns in resulting in inversion of the ankle. This causes pain on the front outside of the ankle joint. This is commonly associated with a collateral ligament injury. A collateral ligament injury occurs when the three ligaments on the outside of the ankle joint, which attach the bone on the fibula to the heel and the talus, become injured. Frequently, the swelling is indicative of an ankle sprain. However, do not trust that it is always a sprain because another common injury, which occurs at the same location, is a lateral process of a talus fracture. This happens when the talus is injured rather than the ligament, causing a break in that bone. The signs and symptoms will be the same. There will be pain on the outside of the ankle joint. Because of the pain, this injury is treated quite differently. Often a CT scan will need to be done along with other detailed imaging studies to determine if this needs a surgical fix.

Most strains and sprains of the outside of the ankle do not need surgical intervention. However, when the talus is involved the fracture needs to be repaired, the fragments need to be excised or the patient needs to be put in a cast. If you do have an injury to the outside of the ankle after a good day of snowboarding, it is best to consult with an orthopedic surgeon. They will assess what damage may have been done determining whether a collateral ligament injury or a talus fracture has occurred. The orthopedist should be able to diagnose this.