



“Using Graded Exposure to Reduce Movement Fear & Improve Sensorimotor Function in those with Chronic Ankle Instability”

NATA FOUNDATION MASTERS RESEARCH
GRANT: 2025-2026

FUNDING: \$1,000

FUNDED BY: TED QUEDENFELD
RESEARCH ENDOWMENT

PROJECT SUMMARY

Roughly 3.1 million lateral ankle sprains occur annually in the United States, of which ~40% will develop persistent limitations defined as chronic ankle instability (CAI). Although CAI is highly prevalent, there has been little advancement in treatment approaches over the past three decades. Traditional CAI rehabilitation focuses primarily on physiological constructs such as postural control and often fails to address the full spectrum of impairments. Psychological considerations, such as movement-related fear, are common in those with CAI but rarely addressed in CAI rehabilitation strategies. This may explain why traditional rehabilitation is only moderately effective at breaking the continuum of disability associated with CAI. Graded exposure therapy (GE) is a behavioral technique that has helped those with musculoskeletal injuries improve both physical and psychological outcomes but has not been explored in those with CAI. Therefore, the aim of this master's thesis is to evaluate the efficacy of a 1-week graded exposure intervention on movement-related fear and postural control in those with CAI. Movement-related fear and postural control will be assessed before and after a 1-week graded exposure intervention over 3-sessions.

IMPACT ON THE ATHLETIC TRAINING PROFESSION

Chronic ankle instability is the most common injury that occurs in an athletic population, representing 15% of all injuries in collegiate athletics. Thus it is not surprising that ankle injuries are the most prevalent musculoskeletal injury in over 70 sports. Targeting psychological factors such as movement-related fear represents a novel and potentially transformative rehabilitation strategy for CAI, helping athletes mitigate long term effects of CAI.



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