



Ankle: VA Disability Rating Explained

The VA rates ankle conditions under several diagnostic codes, based on the severity of the limitation of motion, ankylosis, and other specific conditions. Here's a detailed overview of the rating criteria for common ankle conditions:

Diagnostic Codes and Rating Criteria for Ankle Conditions

1. Diagnostic Code 5270: Ankylosis of the Ankle

- **20%:** Ankylosis in plantar flexion less than 30 degrees.
- **30%:** Ankylosis in plantar flexion between 30 and 40 degrees, or in dorsiflexion between 0 and 10 degrees.
- **40%:** Ankylosis in plantar flexion more than 40 degrees, or in dorsiflexion more than 10 degrees or with abduction, adduction, inversion, or eversion deformity.

2. Diagnostic Code 5271: Limited Motion of the Ankle

- **10%:** Moderate limitation of motion.
- **20%:** Marked limitation of motion.

Note: Normal range of motion for the ankle is 0 to 20 degrees for dorsiflexion and 0 to 45 degrees for plantar flexion.



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3. Diagnostic Code 5272: Ankylosis of Subastragalar or Tarsal Joint

- **10%:** Ankylosis in a good weight-bearing position.
- **20%:** Ankylosis in a poor weight-bearing position.

4. Diagnostic Code 5273: Malunion of Os Calcaneus or Astragalus

- **10%:** Moderate deformity.
- **20%:** Marked deformity.

5. Diagnostic Code 5274: Astragalectomy

- **20%:** Post-surgical condition where the astragalus bone is removed.

Additional Considerations

- **Pain and Functional Loss:** The VA considers pain, weakness, excess fatigability, or incoordination when determining the overall functional loss of the ankle. These factors can affect the rating if they cause additional limitations beyond what is measured by range of motion tests.
- **Stability and Use:** The impact of the ankle condition on stability and daily use can also be factored into the rating.



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Evidence Required to support a claim for an ankle condition, veterans need detailed medical documentation, which may include:

- Range of motion measurements.
- X-rays or other imaging studies.
- Medical history and treatment records.
- Doctor's notes on pain, stability, functional limitations, and how the condition impacts daily activities and occupational functioning.

Steps for Evaluation

1. Range of Motion Testing: Documenting the specific degrees of motion for dorsiflexion and plantar flexion is crucial.
2. Functional Impact: Describing how the ankle condition affects daily activities, work, and overall quality of life.
3. Medical Examinations: Regular check-ups and detailed reports from healthcare providers can strengthen the claim.

Example Rating

- Moderate Limitation: If a veteran has a moderate limitation of motion in the ankle (e.g., dorsiflexion limited to 10 degrees), they might receive a 10% rating under Diagnostic Code 5271.
- Marked Limitation: If the limitation is more severe (e.g., plantar flexion limited to 20 degrees), they might receive a 20% rating. By providing comprehensive medical evidence and detailed descriptions of the functional impact, veterans can ensure that their ankle conditions are accurately rated according to VA criteria.