

# Chronic Ankle Pain and New Swelling in a Sedentary Individual During the COVID-19 Era

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## CASE DIAGNOSIS

A 76-year-old male presenting with five-year history of chronic right ankle pain and new onset swelling of the ankle was found to have deep vein thrombosis (DVT) in the right lower extremity.

## CASE DESCRIPTION

- New swelling began 2-3 weeks prior
- Had started a home exercise program learned from prior physical therapy sessions
- Endorsed sedentary behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic but denied any trauma
- Previous ankle MRI: fibularis tendinopathy, osteoarthritis and an osteochondral defect on the anterolateral talar dome

## DISCUSSION

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on those with and without the infection.

- Population encouraged to stay inside
- Increased sedentary population
- Highlighting the inverse relationship between decreased physical activity and increased risk of DVT

This patient's chronic right ankle pain with new atraumatic painless ankle swelling is not common for a presentation of DVT.

- Maintain a comprehensive differential
- Consider social factors, such as sedentary lifestyle, so as not to miss life threatening diagnoses

## PHYSICAL EXAM/OUTCOME

On exam,

- Asymmetric, 3+ pitting edema around the right ankle with mild pitting extending to the mid-shin
- Minor reduction in ankle range of motion presumably due to local edema
- A venous duplex revealed acute right posterior tibial DVT. He was started on full anticoagulation with Xarelto

## CONCLUSION

Instructive points to the case:

- Importance of maintaining a broad differential when faced with confounding clinical history
- Be mindful of the vast effects COVID-19 has had on our community
- Encourage our patients to maintain mobility in a *safe* manner to reduce the consequences of an increased sedentary lifestyle



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