

STRETCHING EXERCISES

1. Heel Cord Stretch

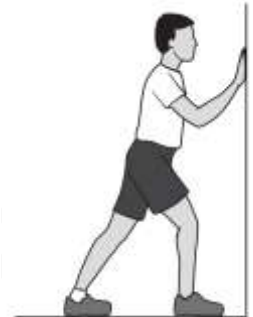
Repetitions - 2 sets of 10

Days per week - 6 to 7

Main muscles worked: Gastrocnemius-soleus complex
You should feel this stretch in your calf and into your heel

Step-by-step directions

- Stand facing a wall with your unaffected leg forward with a slight bend at the knee. Your affected leg is straight and behind you, with the heel and the toes pointed in slightly.
- Keep both heels on the floor and press your hips forward toward the wall.
- Hold this stretch for 30 seconds and then relax for 30 seconds. Repeat. Tip: Do not arch your back.



2. Golf Ball Roll

Repetitions - 1

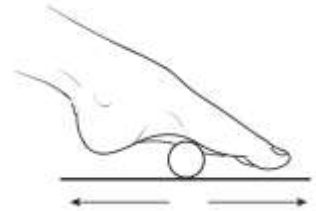
Days per week - Daily

Main muscles worked: Plantar fascia ligament
You should feel this exercise along the bottom of your foot

Equipment needed: Golf ball

Step-by-step directions

- Sit on a stable chair with both feet planted on the floor.
 - Roll a golf ball under the arch of your affected foot for 2 minutes.
- Tip: Sit up tall and keep your foot toward your chair.



3. Towel Stretch

Repetitions - 2 sets of 10

Days per week - 6 to 7

Main muscles worked: Gastrocnemius-soleus complex
You should feel this stretch in your calf and into your heel

Equipment needed: Hand towel

Step-by-step directions

- Sit on the floor with both legs out in front of you.
 - Loop a towel around the ball of your affected foot and grasp the ends of the towel in your hands.
 - Keep your affected leg straight and pull the towel toward you.
 - Hold for 30 seconds and then relax for 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.
- Tip: Sit up tall and keep your legs straight.



4. Calf Raises

Repetitions - 2 sets of 10

Days per week - 6 to 7

Main muscles worked: Gastrocnemius-soleus complex
You should feel this exercise in your calf

Equipment needed: Chair for support

Step-by-step directions

- Stand with your weight evenly distributed over both feet. Hold onto the back of a chair or a wall for balance.
 - Lift your unaffected foot off of the floor so that all of your weight is placed on your affected foot.
 - Raise the heel of your affected foot as high as you can, then lower.
 - Repeat 10 times.
- Tip: Do not bend the knee of your working leg.



5. Ankle Dorsiflexion/Plantar Flexion

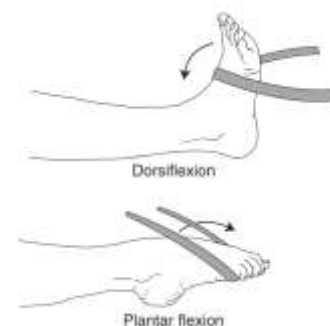
Repetitions - 3 sets of 10

Days per week - 3

Main muscles worked: Anterior tibialis, gastrocnemius-soleus complex

You should feel this exercise at your calf, shin, the back of your heel, and the top of your foot

Equipment needed: Use an elastic stretch band of comfortable resistance



Step-by-step directions

- Sit on the floor with your legs straight out in front of you.
 - For dorsiflexion, anchor the elastic band on a chair or table leg, and then wrap it around your foot.
 - Pull your toes toward you and slowly return to the start position. Repeat 10 times.
 - For plantar flexion, wrap the elastic band around your foot and hold the ends in your hand.
 - Gently point your toes and slowly return to the start position. Repeat 10 times.
- Tip: Keep your leg straight and heel on the floor for support.

6. Supine Hamstring Stretch

Repetitions - 2 to 3

Days per week - 4 to 5

Main muscles worked: Hamstrings

You should feel this stretch at the back of your thigh and behind your knee

Step-by-step directions

- Lie on the floor with both legs bent.
 - Lift one leg off of the floor and bring the knee toward your chest. Clasp your hands behind your thigh below your knee.
 - Straighten your leg and then pull it gently toward your head, until you feel a stretch. (If you have difficulty clasping your hands behind your leg, loop a towel around your thigh. Grasp the ends of the towel and pull your leg toward you.)
 - Hold this position for 30 to 60 seconds.
 - Repeat with the opposite leg.
- Tip: Do not put your hands at your knee joint and pull.



7. Leg Extensions

Repetitions 3 sets of 10

Days per week 4 to 5

Main muscles worked: Quadriceps

You should feel this exercise at the front of your thigh

Equipment needed: As the exercise becomes easier to perform, gradually increase the resistance by adding an ankle weight. Begin with a 5 lb. weight and gradually progress to a greater level of resistance, up to a 10 lb. weight. If you have access to a fitness center, this exercise can also be performed on a weight machine.

Step-by-step directions

- Sit up straight on a chair or bench.
 - Tighten your thigh muscles and slowly straighten and raise your affected leg as high as possible.
 - Squeeze your thigh muscles and hold this position for 5 seconds. Relax and bring your foot to the floor. Repeat.
- Tip: Do not swing your leg or use forceful momentum to lift it higher.

