

Ankle Sprain Rehabilitation Exercises

As soon as you can tolerate pressure on the ball of your foot, begin stretching your ankle using the towel stretch. When this stretch is too easy, try the standing calf stretch and soleus stretch.

- **Towel stretch:** Sit on a hard surface with one leg stretched out in front of you. Loop a towel around your toes and the ball of your foot and pull the towel toward your body keeping your knee straight. Hold this position for 15 to 30 seconds then relax. Repeat 3 times.
- **Standing calf stretch:** Facing a wall, put your hands against the wall at about eye level. Keep one leg back with the heel on the floor, and the other leg forward. Turn your back foot slightly inward (as if you were pigeon-toed) as you slowly lean into the wall until you feel a stretch in the back of your calf. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times and then switch the position of your legs and repeat the exercise 3 times. Do this exercise several times each day.
- **Standing soleus stretch:** Stand facing a wall with your hands on a wall at about chest level. With both knees slightly bent and one foot back, gently lean into the wall until you feel a stretch in your lower calf. Angle the toes of your back foot slightly inward and keep your heel down on the floor. Hold this for 15 to 30 seconds. Return to the starting position. Repeat 3 times.

You can do the next 5 exercises when your ankle swelling has stopped increasing.

- **Ankle range of motion:** Sitting or lying down with your legs straight and your knee toward the ceiling, move your ankle up and down by pointing your toes toward your nose, then away from your body; in toward your other foot and out away from your other foot; and in circles. Only move your foot and ankle. Don't move your leg. Repeat 10 times in each direction. Push hard in all directions.



- **Resisted ankle dorsiflexion:** Sit with one leg out straight and your foot facing a doorway. Tie a loop in one end of elastic tubing. Put your foot through the loop so that the tubing goes around the arch of your foot. Tie a knot in the other end of the tubing and shut the knot in the door. Move backward until there is tension in the tubing. Keeping your knee straight, pull your foot toward your body, stretching the tubing. Slowly return to the starting position. Do 3 sets of 10.



- **Resisted ankle plantar flexion:** Sit with your leg outstretched and loop the middle section of the tubing around the ball of your foot. Hold the ends of the tubing in both hands. Gently press the ball of your foot down and point your toes, stretching the tubing. Return to the starting position. Do 3 sets of 10.
- **Resisted ankle inversion:** Sit with your legs out straight and cross one leg over your other ankle. Wrap elastic tubing around the ball of your bottom foot and then loop it around your top foot so that the tubing is anchored there at one end. Hold the other end of the tubing in your hand. Turn your bottom foot inward and upward. This will stretch the tubing. Return to the starting position. Do 3 sets of 10.
- **Resisted ankle eversion:** Sit with both legs stretched out in front of you, with your feet about a shoulder's width apart. Tie a loop in one end of elastic tubing. Put one foot through the loop so that the tubing goes around the arch of that foot and wraps around the outside of the other foot. Hold onto the other end of the tubing with your hand to provide tension. Turn the foot with the tubing up and out. Make sure you keep your other foot still so that it will allow the tubing to stretch as you move your foot with the tubing. Return to the starting position. Do 3 sets of 10.

You may do the rest of the exercises when you can stand on your injured ankle without pain.

- **Heel raise:** Balance yourself while standing behind a chair or counter. Using the chair to help you, raise your body up onto your toes and hold for 5 seconds. Then slowly lower yourself down without holding onto the chair. Hold onto the chair or counter if you need to. When this exercise becomes less painful, try lowering on one leg only. Repeat 10 times. Do 3 sets of 10.
- **Step-up:** Stand with the foot of your injured leg on a support (like a small step or block of wood) 3 to 5 inches high. Keep your other foot flat on the floor. Shift your weight onto your injured leg on the support straighten your knee as the other leg comes off the floor. Lower your leg back to the floor slowly. Do 3 sets of 10.
- **Balance and reach exercises**

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Stand upright next to a chair with your injured leg farthest from the chair. This will provide you with support if you need it. Stand just on the foot of your injured leg. Try to raise the arch of this foot while keeping your toes on the floor.

1. Keep your foot in this position and reach forward in front of you with the hand farthest away from the chair, allowing your knee to bend. Repeat



this 10 times while maintaining the arch height. This exercise can be made more difficult by reaching farther in front of you. Do 2 sets.

2. Stand in the same position as above. While maintaining your arch height, reach the hand farthest away from the chair across your body toward the chair. The farther you reach, the more challenging the exercise. Do 2 sets of 10.
- **Jump rope:** Jump rope landing, on both legs, for 5 minutes, then on only one leg at a time for 5 minutes.

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Towel stretch



Standing calf stretch



Standing soleus stretch



Ankle active range of motion



Resisted ankle dorsiflexion

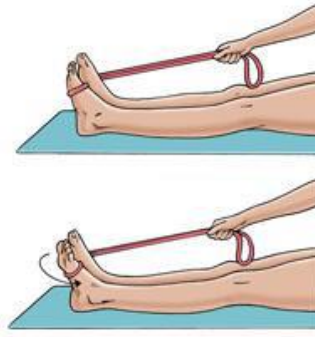


Resisted ankle plantar flexion

Ankle Sprain Rehabilitation Exercises



Resisted ankle inversion



Resisted ankle eversion



Heel raise



Step-up



Balance and reach exercise A



Balance and reach exercise B



Jump rope