

Calf Strain Rehabilitation Exercises

You can begin gently stretching your calf muscle using the towel stretch right away. Make sure you only get a gentle pull and not a sharp pain while you are doing this 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.

After you can do the towel stretch easily, you can start the standing calf stretch.

- **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.

After a couple days of stretching, you can begin strengthening your calf and lower leg muscles using elastic tubing as described in the next exercise.

- **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.

You may do the last 4 exercises when you can stand on your toes 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



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need to. When this exercise becomes less painful, try lowering on one leg only. Repeat 10 times. Do 3 sets of 10.

You can challenge yourself by standing only on your injured leg and lifting your heel off the ground.

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- **Single leg balance:** Stand without any support and attempt to balance on one leg. Begin with your eyes open and then try to perform the exercise with your eyes closed. Hold the single-leg position for 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times. When you have mastered this, try doing this exercise standing on a pillow.
- **Nose touch:** Stand on one leg facing a wall. Stand 4 inches from the wall. Keep your body and leg straight. Slowly lean forward, trying to touch your nose to the wall. Make sure you do not bend forward at your waist. Do 3 sets or 10.
- **Wall jump:** Face a wall and place a piece of masking tape about 2 feet above your head. Jump up with your arms above your head and try to touch the piece of tape. Make sure you do a "spring" type of motion and do not land hard onto your feet. Progress to taking off and landing on one foot. Do 3 sets of 10.

Another good exercise is hopping. You can start at one end of the room and try to hop as high as you can across the room on one foot. Jumping rope is also a good exercise.

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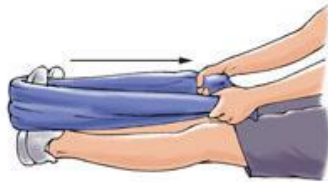


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