

Shin Pain (Shin Splints) Rehabilitation Exercises

Start these exercises when your pain has decreased by about 25% from the time when your injury was most painful.

- **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.

When you don't feel much of a stretch using the towel, start using 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.
- **Anterior compartment stretch:** Stand with one hand against a wall or chair for balance. Bend your knee and grab the front of your foot on your leg which is away from the wall. Bend the front of the foot toward your heel. You should feel a stretch in the front of your shin. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.
- **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.
- **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

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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.

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- **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.
- **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.
- **Standing toe raise:** Stand with your feet flat on the floor, rock back onto your heels and lift your toes off the floor. Hold this for 5 seconds. Do 3 sets of 10.
- **Balance and reach exercises**

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.
- **Resisted hip abduction:** Stand sideways near a doorway. Tie elastic tubing around the ankle on your leg which is away from the door. Knot the other end of the tubing and



close the knot in the door. Extend your leg out to the side, keeping your knee straight. Return to the starting position. Do 3 sets of 10.

To challenge yourself, move farther away from the door.
Do this exercise on both legs.

Written by Tammy White, MS, PT, and Phyllis Clapis, PT, DHSc, OCS, for RelayHealth.

Published by RelayHealth.

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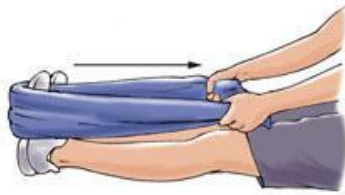


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Towel stretch



Standing calf stretch



Anterior compartment stretch



Resisted ankle dorsiflexion



Ankle active range of motion

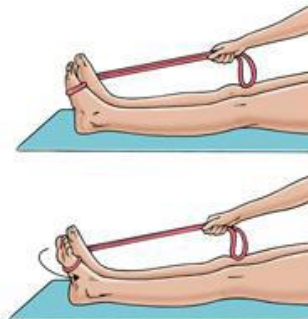


Heel raise

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Resisted ankle inversion



Resisted ankle eversion



Standing toe raise



Balance and reach exercise A



Balance and reach exercise B



Resisted hip abduction