

PATIENT INFORMATION

Strengthening Exercises for Calf Muscles

Our assessment has shown that the muscles that form your calves, the gastrocnemius and soleus muscles, in one or both of your lower legs are weakened, and may be contributing to any foot, ankle or lower limb pain that you may be experiencing.

These muscles are responsible for plantarflexing your foot, in other words pointing your foot down towards the floor. They are important muscles that help propel us forwards when we are walking or running.

It is important to address this weakness, and so we have asked you to perform regular strengthening exercises to achieve this.



Steps to strengthen the gastrocnemius and soleus (calf) muscles:

1. The easiest way to start strengthening the calf muscles is to perform heel raises. You may wish to start by doing these while sat down in a chair, and as the muscle strength improves, you could try standing up.
2. Either sat down, or standing up (holding on to an item of furniture for support if needed), slowly raise both your heels off the ground together, so you are standing on tip toes. Keep your toes on the ground at all times.



3. Hold this position for 2 second, then slowly lower your heels until they are back on the floor.
4. Repeat this for another 9 repetitions, so you have performed this exercise 10 times
5. After a rest, repeat steps 2 through 4 another two times, so that you have completed a total of 3 sets of 10 raises.
6. Once you are able to complete the above steps comfortably, and **if your balance allows**, you can move on to walking whilst on tip toes.
7. Raise your heels off the ground, and carefully take 20 steps whilst on your toes – keep your heels off the ground all the time.
8. After a rest, repeat this twice more, so that you have performed 3 sets of this exercise, i.e. 3 x 20 steps.

**STOP IF YOU FIND THESE EXERCISES
PAINFUL – CONSULT THE PODIATRY
DEPARTMENT OR A PHYSIOTHERAPIST
BEFORE CONTINUING!**

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.