6-week Calf and Achilles Tendon Strengthening Program

UP & RUNNING
FROM PAIN TO PERFORMANCE
REMEDIAL MASSAGE CLINIC

If you've recently injured your gastrocnemius (calf muscle), soleus (the "runner's muscle"), or are dealing with Achilles tendinopathy, this program is designed to help you recover. It focuses on progressively rebuilding strength in your muscles and tendons while gradually exposing them to the demands of daily activities and sports.

This structured, progressive program runs three to four times per week, with each week building upon the previous one. The goal is to allow your muscles and tendons to adapt and regain strength, ensuring a smooth return to your usual activities or sport.

To progress to the next stage, you must complete the current week's exercises successfully. If you experience tenderness, weakness, or discomfort, remain at the current level (or regress to the previous week if necessary) until your symptoms subside and the affected area is strong enough to advance. This step-by-step approach ensures a safe and effective recovery, getting you back to full function with confidence.

General Guidelines:

- **Warm-Up:** Start each session with a 5-10 minute warm-up (e.g., brisk walking, bike ride or light dynamic stretching).
- **Cool Down:** End each session with stretches to enhance flexibility and prevent stiffness.
- **Rest Days:** Ensure adequate rest between sessions for recovery.
- **Listen to Your Body:** Modify exercises if you experience pain, and consult a professional if needed.

Program Timetable

WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6
Seated Calf Raise	Standing Calf Raise	Single Leg Calf Raise	Seated Calf Raise with Resistance	Squat Jumps	Single Leg Eccentric Heel Drop with Resistance
Straight Leg Calf Stretch	Bent Knee Achilles Stretch	Straight & Bent Knee Stretch	Straight & Bent Knee Stretch	Single Leg Calf Raise with Resistance	Broad Jumps
Ankle Alphabet	Eccentric Heel Drops	Eccentric Heel Drops	Standing Calf Raise with Resistance	Box Jumps	Hopping on One Leg
	Hamstring Curls	Heel Walks	Single Leg Deadlift	Lateral Bounds	Single Leg Box Jumps
		Single Leg Deadlift	Single Leg Eccentric Heel Drop	Skipping	Jog-Walk Intervals

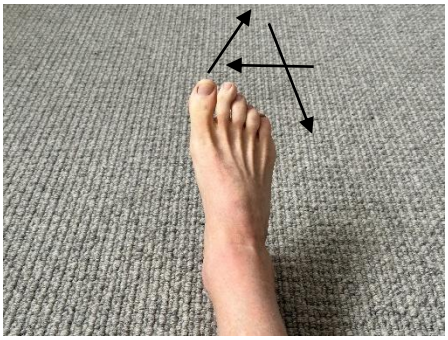
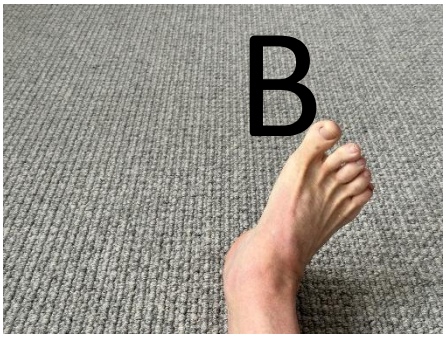
Note:
To progress to the next stage, you must complete the current week's exercises successfully.
Regress to the previous week, if necessary, until strong enough to advance.
At any stage you can continue doing the previous weeks exercises if you enjoy them.

Week 1: Foundation Building
Frequency: 3 times per week (e.g., Monday, Wednesday, Friday)
Exercises:

1. **Seated Calf Raises**
    - **Description:** Sit on a chair with your feet flat on the floor. Raise your heels while keeping your toes on the ground. Hold for a moment, then lower back down.
    - **Reps:** 3 sets of 10-12. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

2. **Straight-Leg Calf Stretch**
    - **Description:** Stand facing a wall, place your hands on the wall for support. Step one foot back, keeping it straight while bending the front knee. Press the back heel into the ground.
    - **Duration:** 2 sets of 30 seconds each leg.

3. **Ankle Alphabet Exercise**
    - **Description:** While seated or standing, lift one foot off the ground and use your big toe to "write" the alphabet in the air.
    - **Duration:** Complete the alphabet twice for each foot.

For a video of these exercises please scan the QR Code →

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Week 2: Strengthening Phase
Frequency: 3 times per week
Exercises:

1. **Standing Calf Raises**
    - **Description:** Stand with your feet hip-width apart. Rise up onto your toes, hold for a moment, then slowly lower back down.
    - **Reps:** 3 sets of 10-15. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

2. **Bent-Knee Achilles Stretch**
    - **Description:** Stand facing a wall, place your hands on the wall for support. Step one foot back, bend it at the knee while bending the front knee. Press the ball of the foot into the ground.
    - **Duration:** 2 sets of 30 seconds each leg.

3. **Eccentric Heel Drops (on a step)**
    - **Description:** Stand on the edge of a step with your heels hanging off. Lower your heels below the step level, then return to the starting position (using arms to assist).
    - **Reps:** 3 sets of 10-12. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

4. **Hamstring Curls**
    - **Description:** Lying face down on the ground. Bend one knee, bringing your heel toward your glutes. Lower back down. Use an exercise band around the ankle for resistance (Be careful of this rubbing if you have Achilles Tendon issues).
    - **Reps:** 3 sets of 10-12 each leg. Rest 60 seconds between sets

Week 3: Increasing Intensity
Frequency: 4 times per week
Exercises:

1. **Single-Leg Calf Raises**
    - **Description:** Stand on one leg, rise onto your toes, hold for a moment, then lower back down. Switch legs after completing the set.
    - **Reps:** 3 sets of 8-10 each leg. Rest 60 seconds between sets

2. **Alternate between Straight-Leg and Bent-Knee stretches**
    - **Duration:** 2 sets of 30 seconds each leg.

3. **Eccentric Heel Drops (on a step)**
    - **Description:** As above, but add a 1-2 second pause at the bottom of the drop.
    - **Reps:** 3 sets of 12-15. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

4. **Heel Walks**
    - **Description:** Walk on your heels for 30 seconds, keeping your toes off the ground.
    - **Duration:** 2 sets of 30 seconds.

5. **Single-Leg Deadlift**
    - **Description:** Stand on one leg, hinge at the hips to lower your torso while extending the opposite leg straight back. Return to standing.
    - **Reps:** 3 sets of 8-10 each leg. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

Week 4: Advanced Strengthening
Frequency: 4 times per week
Exercises:

1. **Seated Calf Raises with Resistance**
    - **Description:** Sit with your feet flat on the ground. Hold a weight on your knees, raise your heels while keeping your toes down, then lower back.
    - **Reps:** 3 sets of 8-10. Rest 90 seconds between sets.

2. **Alternate between Straight-Leg and Bent-Knee stretches**
    - **Duration:** 2 sets of 30 seconds each leg.

3. **Standing Calf Raises with Resistance**
    - **Description:** Stand with your feet hip-width apart. Hold a weight with your hands or put a backpack on with weight in it. Rise up onto your toes, hold for a moment, then slowly lower back down.
    - **Reps:** 3 sets of 8-10. Rest 90 seconds between sets.

4. **Single-Leg Deadlift**
    - **Description:** As above.
    - **Reps:** 3 sets of 10 each leg. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

5. **Single Leg Eccentric Heel Drops (on a step)**
    - **Description:** Stand on the edge of a step with one heel hanging off. Lower your heel below the step level, then rise onto your toes, hold for a moment, then lower back down (use arms to assist). Switch legs after completing the set.
    - **Reps:** 3 sets of 5-10 each leg. Rest 60 seconds between sets**.**

Week 5: Foundation Plyometrics
Frequency: 3 times a week
Exercises:

1. **Squat Jumps**
    - **Description:** Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Lower into a squat and explode upward, landing softly.
    - **Reps:** 3 sets of 8-10. Rest 60 seconds.

2. **Single-Leg Calf Raises with Resistance**
    - **Description:** Stand on one leg. Hold a weight with your hands or put a backpack on with weight in it. Perform the calf raise as before.
    - **Reps:** 3 sets of 8-10 each leg. Rest 90 seconds between sets.

3. **Box Jumps (or Step-Ups)**
    - **Description:** Stand in front of a sturdy box or step. Jump or step up, landing softly, then step back down.
    - **Reps**: 3 sets of 8-10. Rest 60 seconds.

4. **Lateral Bounds**
    - **Description:** Stand on one leg and jump sideways to land on the opposite leg. Control your landing and immediately jump back.
    - **Reps:** 3 sets of 6-8 each side. Rest 60 seconds.

5. **Skipping**
    - **Duration:** Using a skipping rope jump with both feet together.
    - **Duration:** 2 sets of 30 seconds

Week 6: Advanced Plyometrics
Frequency: 3 times a week
Exercises:

1. **Single Leg Eccentric Heel drops with Resistance**
    - **Description:** Stand on the edge of a step with one heel hanging off. Lower your heel below the step level, then rise onto your toes, hold for a moment, then lower back down (use arms to assist). Use weights in your hands or a backpack with weight in it. Switch legs after completing the set.
    - **Reps:** 3 sets of 5-10 each leg. Rest 60 seconds between sets**.**

2. **Broad Jumps**
    - **Description:** Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Bend your knees and jump forward as far as you can, landing softly.
    - **Reps:** 3 sets of 6-8. Rest 90 seconds.

3. **Hopping on One Leg**
    - **Description:** Hop on one leg for distance, landing softly. Switch legs after completing each set.
    - **Reps:** 3 sets of 6-8 each leg. Rest 60 seconds.

4. **Single-Leg Box Jumps**
    - **Description:** Using a box, jump onto it using one leg, landing softly. Alternate legs.
    - **Reps:** 3 sets of 6-8 each leg. Rest 90 seconds.

5. **Jog-Walk Intervals**
    - **Description:** Alternate between jogging for 1 minute and walking for 2 minutes.
    - **Duration:** 15-20 minutes total.