

CALF STRETCHES

For therapy and injury prevention



A step-by-step guide to causes, concerns and proper treatment for your calves

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Calf Muscle

Stretching Tips

- Stretch until a tightness or resistance is felt, then hold.
- Do not go to the point of pain. Stretching should not be painful.
- Stretching should be done slowly and with control.
- Repeat stretches 3 times per leg by taking the stretch a little further and holding.
- Stretches should be held for a minimum 45 seconds or until resistance is no longer felt.
- Stretches must be done at least 2 times a day every day to see results.

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WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

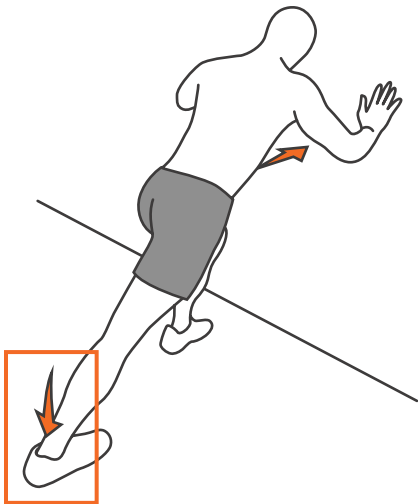
A short calf muscle can compromise gait function by reducing the range of motion around the ankle joint. It can force your foot to compensate by pronating, twisting or lifting the heel too early in the natural gait cycle. This puts stress on the structures in your feet, ankle and right up to your knees and back! Therefore it is important to perform calf stretching regularly.

Note: Long term use of high-heeled shoes can result in shortened calve muscles.

STRETCH #1

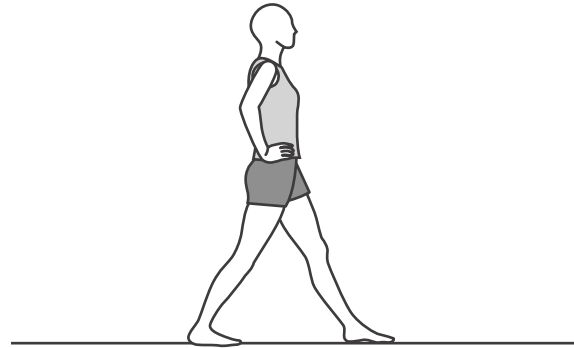
The following stretch should be done approximately 2 feet away from a wall:

1. Bracing your hands against the wall, place your right foot behind your left as shown in the diagram below.
2. Lean your chest toward the wall. You can bend your left knee slightly to facilitate moving the chest up closer to the wall.
3. Perform 3 sets on each leg, holding the exercise for 30 seconds each time.

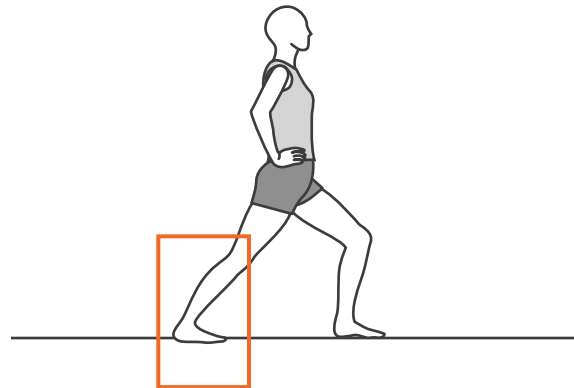


STRETCH #2

1. Place your hands on your hips, and take a large step forward with your left foot. Be sure to keep your back straight and your shoulders back and down.

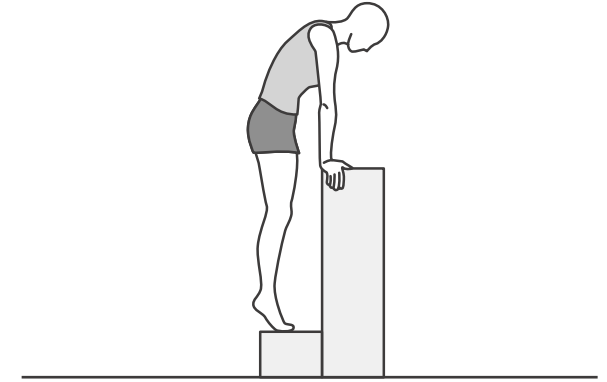


2. Bend your left leg but don't allow the knee to extend past your toes. Gently shift your weight forward, keeping your right heel on the floor. Hold the stretch for 45 seconds to 1 minute, then release. Repeat with your right leg forward.

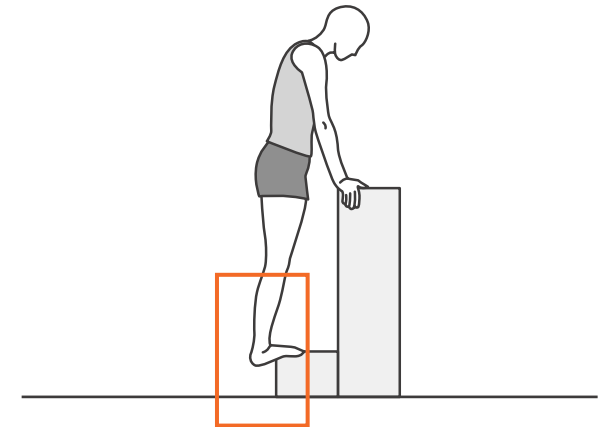


STRETCH #3

1. Stand with your toes and the balls of your feet on a step, your weight forward. Hold onto a support for balance, if needed. Lift your heels as high as you can.



2. Slowly lower your heels below the step line until you feel a good stretch in your lower calves. Hold for 45 seconds to 1 minute.



Always consult with a physiotherapist before starting any therapeutic strengthening and stretching exercise program.