



Greater Hartford Orthopedic Group

Rehabilitation exercises for foot and ankle problems

- 1) Standing calf stretch (straight leg/Gastrocnemius)



Facing a wall put your hands against it at about eye level. Keep your injured leg back with your heel on the floor. Keep the other leg forward. Turn your back foot slightly inward (as if you were pigeon-toed) and slowly lean into the wall until you feel a stretch in the back of your calf. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds and then relax. Repeat 3 times.

- 2) Standing calf stretch (knee bent/Soleus)



Stand with foot back, both knees bent and keeping the heel on the floor, turned slightly out. Lean into a wall until the stretch is felt in the lower calf. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds and then relax. Repeat 3 times.

- 3) Balance (one leg)



Attempt to balance on right/left leg, eyes open, for 30 seconds. Perform exercise with eyes closed for 15 seconds. Stand next to a chair or wall for safety.

- 4) Ankle alphabet



Using ankle and foot only, trace the capital letters of the alphabet in the air. Perform A to Z. You can use the big toe as a pointer.

5) Towel pickup



With your heel on the ground, pick up a towel with your toes, using only the toes of your injured foot. Repeat 10 to 20 times. When this gets easy, add more resistance by placing a book or small weight on the end of the towel.

6) Ankle Inversion/Eversion



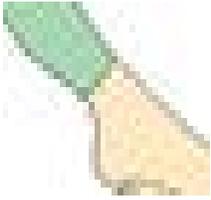
With the leg relaxed, gently turn ankle and foot in and out. Move through full range of motion. Avoid pain.

7) Towel stretch



Sit on a hard surface with your injured leg stretched out in front of you. Loop a towel around your foot and pull the towel toward your body keeping your leg straight until you start to feel a stretch in your calf muscles. Hold this position for 15 to 30 seconds and then relax. Repeat 3 times.

8) Frozen can roll



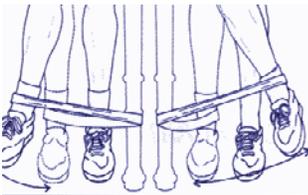
Roll your bare injured foot back and forth from your heel to your mid-arch over a frozen juice can. Repeat for 3 to 5 minutes. This exercise is particularly helpful if done first thing in the morning for heel pain.

9) Toe raise/Heel drop



Stand with forefeet on raised surface, as if doing a backdive off of a diving board. Raise up onto your toes, then return to standing position. Next, let your weight take your heels down below the level of the surface so that the back of your calf is stretched. Hold each position for 10-15 seconds. Repeat until calf is fully fatigued.

10) Proprioception



Standing on the injured ankle, place an elastic band under a table leg and over uninjured ankle. Pull to side, hold and return. Then face in opposite direction and pull across the injured ankle.