

Foot and Ankle home exercises

These exercises and images have been reproduced with thanks to Dr Martin Spink and La Trobe University

In line with professional advice, resistance band exercises should be done under supervision or used as instructed by a physiotherapist or health care professional. Please always follow safety advice and make sure you are using the correct colour of band to suit your ability (colours indicate different levels of resistance for different strengths). Check your equipment is not damaged or worn. If any discomfort, distress, pain or dizziness is experienced, stop the exercise immediately and seek medical help.

These exercises are recommended to be carried out three times a week for 30 minutes each time.

Please note, attempt as many exercises as you can and only do what feels comfortable. Only do the resistant band exercises if you have been shown or advised by a physiotherapist.



Summary of exercises and dosages

Name	Quantity	increments
Ankle circling exercise	One set of ten circles in each direction on each foot	None
Toe strengthening exercise (picking up marbles with toes)	Two sets of 20 marbles on each foot, 30 seconds rest between sets	If you have difficulty picking up marbles, start with as many as you can and gradually increase to 20.
Big toe stretch (Big toe pull)	One set of three repetitions holding 20 seconds each time	Increase distance of toe stretch as far as you are able
Double heel raise exercise (rising up on toes)	Three sets of ten repetitions, 30 seconds rest between sets	Increase repetition in each set by two, up to 50 repetitions or as many as you are able
Ankle Dorsiflexion (toe-up) exercise	One set of repetitions holding ten seconds each time	Increase repetition by one until you reach ten repetitions or as many as you are able
Calf stretch in standing	One set of three repetitions on each leg, holding for 20 seconds each time	Increase distance of back foot as far as you are able
Ankle inversion (turn- in) exercise	Three sets of ten repetitions on each foot, 30 seconds rest between each set	Increase resistance of resistive exercise band
Ankle Eversion (turn-out) exercise	Three sets of ten repetitions on each foot, 30 seconds rest between each set	Increase resistance of resistive exercise band

Ankle circling exercise

Set- up

1. Sit comfortably in a chair with both feet on the ground.



Clockwise circling exercise

1. Lift one foot off the ground and hold it up in the air.
2. Using slow and gentle movements, rotate ankle and circle the foot in a clockwise direction, making as large a circle as possible.
3. Repeat ten circles in a clockwise direction, then place foot down to rest.
4. Lift the other foot off and repeat ten clockwise circles using this foot.



Anti-clockwise circling exercise

1. Lift the first foot off the ground again and hold it up in the air.
2. This time, rotate the ankle and circle the foot in an anti-clockwise direction again making as large a circle as possible.
3. Repeat ten times in an anti-clockwise direction and then place the foot down to rest.
4. Lift the other foot off and repeat ten anti-clockwise circles using this foot.



Quantity

Do only one set of ten circles in each direction on each foot.



Toe strengthening exercise (picking up marbles with toes)

Set- up

1. Sit comfortably in a chair.
2. Place 20 marbles on the floor and an empty container by the side of the marbles.



Exercise

1. Use your toes to pick up a marble off the floor.
2. Release it into the container.
3. Keep picking up the marbles with your toes until all 20 marbles have been picked up and released into the container.
4. Tip the marbles out onto the floor again, and repeat the exercise with your other foot.



Quantity

Repeat the exercise twice with each foot, each time picking up 20 marbles.

If you have difficulty with picking up all 20 marbles with your toes, just pick up as many as you are able to and gradually build up to 20 marbles.



Big toe stretch (big toe pull)

Set- up

1. Sit comfortably in a chair.
2. Loop the rubber band provided around both your big toes as shown.



Exercise

1. Slide one foot away from the other until you feel a comfortable stretch in your big toes from the rubber band.
2. Keep both feet on the ground and hold the stretch in the big toes for 20 seconds.
3. Relax and return the foot to the starting position.
4. Repeat three times.



Double heel raise exercise (rising up on toes)

Set- up

1. Stand in front of a wall with hands on the wall for balance and your feet flat on the ground at a comfortable distance apart.

Exercise

1. Slowly rise up onto your toes on both feet.
2. Rise up as high as you can, then slowly lower yourself back down onto the ground.
3. Repeat the exercise ten times.

Quantity

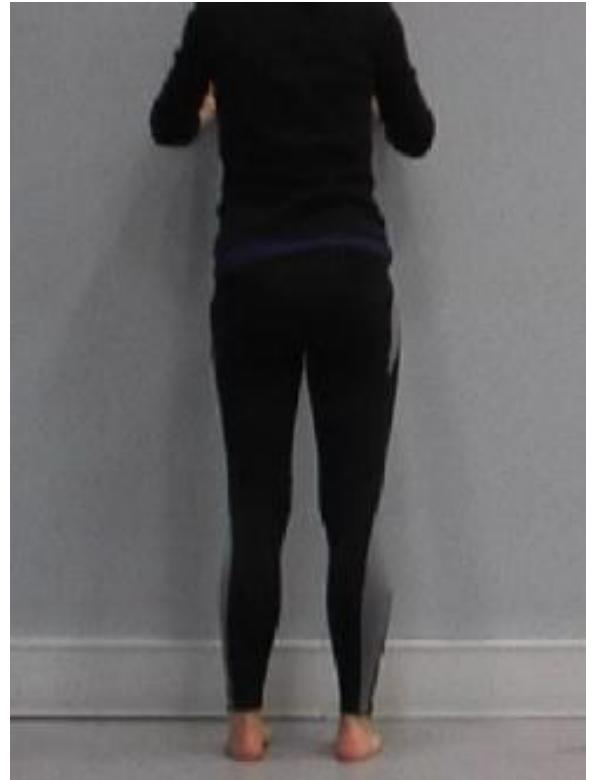
Do three sets of ten repetitions. Have 30 seconds rest in between each set

Progression

Start with ten repetitions.

Once you can complete all three sets of ten repetitions without any difficulty or soreness the next day, increase the number of repetition by two to 12 and do three sets of 12 repetitions.

Keep increasing the number of repetitions by two until you reach 50, or as many as you are able to. It does not matter if you cannot go up to 50 repetitions.



Ankle dorsiflexion (toe-up) exercise

Set- up

1. Sit comfortably in a chair with both feet flat on the ground.



Exercise

1. Lift your toes on both feet off the ground as high as you can and hold for ten seconds.
2. Ensure that your heels remain in contact with the ground at all times.

Quantity

Start with one set of three repetitions, holding for ten seconds each time.

If you can do three repetitions without difficulty or muscle soreness the next day, increase by one repetition to four repetitions of ten seconds.

Keep increasing the number of repetitions until you reach ten repetitions. It does not matter if you do not reach ten repetitions. You only need to do one set of repetitions of this exercise.



Standing calf stretch

Set-up

1. Stand in front of a wall with your hands on the wall for balance, feet flat on the ground at a comfortable distance apart.
2. Place one foot behind you, about a step away. Ensure the back heel is flat on the ground at all times. Keep your hips, knees and toes pointing forwards and square to the wall at all times.

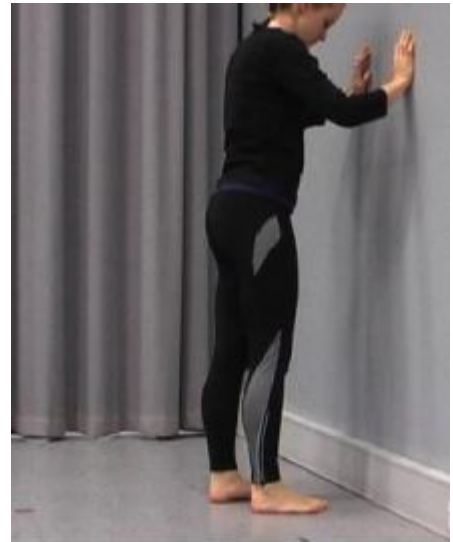
Stretch

1. Keeping the back leg straight, slowly bend the front knee and bring yourself towards the wall.
2. Lean towards the wall until you feel a stretch in the calf muscle at the back of your leg.
3. If you have gone as far as you can and cannot feel a stretch, move your foot a little further behind you and try again.
4. Once you feel a medium to strong stretch in the back leg, stop and hold the stretch for 20 seconds.
5. After 20 seconds, relax and have a little rest. Then repeat the stretch again.
6. Repeat the stretch three times on one leg. Then change feet by placing the other leg behind and repeat three times on the other leg.

Quantity

Repeat three times with each leg or as many times as you are able.

Hold the stretch for 20 seconds each time.



Attaching your resistance band

(Ask a family member or friend for help if you are unable to do this yourself and only attach the resistance band if it is safe to do so.)

1. Fold your resistance band in half and tie a knot at the two loose ends to form a loop.
2. Hold the loop, stretched out horizontally next to a sturdy table leg with the knotted end pointing away from the table.
3. Pull the unknotted side through the loop at the knotted end around the table leg and tighten to secure.



An alternative to attaching your resistance band to a sturdy table leg is to attach it to the leg you are not exercising. Only do this if you are strong enough to do so. Always seek the advice from a physiotherapist.

1. Sit comfortably in a chair.
2. Fold your resistance band in half and tie a knot at the two loose ends to form a loop.
3. Place the loop on the floor and put both feet inside the loop, make sure you are sitting comfortably.
4. Pull the loop up so it sits around the ankle of the foot that is not being exercised (the first foot).
5. Perform the chosen exercise with the second foot.
6. Swap around to exercise the first foot.



Ankle inversion (turn-in) exercise

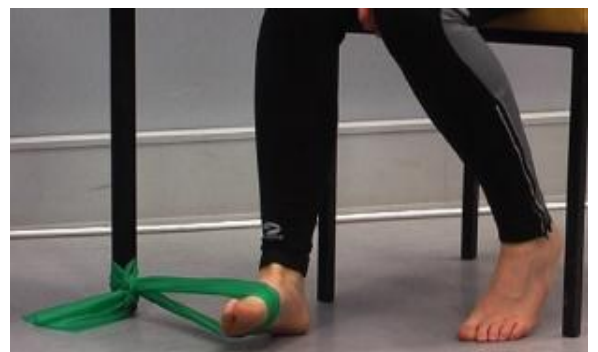
Set- up

1. Sit comfortably close to where the resistance band is attached. Sit with your feet flat on the ground.



Exercise

1. Loop the free end of the resistance band around the foot that is closest to the table.
2. Pull away the foot that is in the loop until the band is taut.
3. Place your hand on the exercising knee to prevent the knee from turning during exercise.
4. Use your foot to pull on the resistance band by slowly turning your foot away from the table leg.
5. Slowly return the foot until it is flat on the ground.
6. Repeat the exercise ten times.



Ankle eversion (turn-out) exercise

Exercise

1. When you have finished with the inversion exercise, remove the resistance band from around the inside of your foot and loop it around the outside of your other foot in the same manner, at the level base of your toes.
2. Pull your foot away from the table until the band is taut.
3. Place your hands on your exercising knee to prevent the knee from turning during the exercise.
4. Use your foot to pull on the resistance band by slowly turning your foot away from the table leg and finishing with the outside sole of your foot off the ground, facing away from the table leg.
5. Slowly return the foot until it is flat on the ground.
6. Repeat the exercise ten times.

Quantity

Do three sets of ten repetitions.

Have a 30 second rest in between each set.

Turn the chair around and repeat the movements with the opposite feet.

As before start with the inside foot for inversion, then change the resistance band to the outside foot for eversion.

