Podiatry & Orthotics Department

Calf Muscle Stretching Guide

Patient Information



The calf muscles are made up of 2 muscles at the back of your lower leg (Gastrocnemius & Soleus). They are connected to your heel via the Achilles tendon.

Calf muscles are very active during every day activities - lifting us up, driving us forward and stabilising our ankles.

They can become tight as a result of daily activity, normal aging and some medical conditions such as diabetes.

Tight calf muscles place increased pressure on the foot and ankle and it is important to stretch them regularly to help improve the range of motion and reduce pain.

It is normal to feel some discomfort with stretching but the stretch should not be painful. If you have new pain or your current symptoms worsen stop doing the exercises.

Towel Stretch

- Whilst in a seated position with your legs out straight, loop a towel around the ball of your foot.
- Keeping your knee straight, pull the ends of the towel towards you.
- Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times each side. 3 times per day.



Lunge Stretch



- Stand at arm's length from a wall or kitchen counter.
- Place one foot behind the other. Slowly bend your front knee, keeping your back leg straight and heel on the floor. Engage your core muscles.
- Hold for about 30 seconds & relax Switch legs and repeat.
- Repeat this exercise 3 times each side. 3 times per day.

Step Stretch



- Hold onto something for support.
- Place both feet on the bottom step of the stairs – hip width apart.
- Slide one foot back until only the ball of the foot remains on the step.
- Keeping this knee straight, bend the opposite knee and lower the heel below the level of the step until a tightening is felt in the calf.
- Hold for 30 seconds & relax.
- Repeat this exercise 3 times each side.3 times per day.

If you are experiencing any new pain or difficulty following these exercises contact Podiatry and Orthotics Department on 01633 615225 or email risca.podiatry@wales.nhs.uk

"This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg".