

Calf Stretching Exercise Handouts

Prepared by **Dr. Saint-Vil**

Last update: 07/03/2022



Calf Muscles

On the back of the lower thigh, the calf muscle consists of two muscles:

- The greater calf muscle, the gastrocnemius, causes the bulge under the skin. The gastrocnemius has two "heads" that together form a diamond-shaped structure.
- Under the gastrocnemius muscle is the soleus, a smaller, flat muscle.

At the bottom of the calf muscle, the gastrocnemius and soleus muscles taper and converge. The Achilles tendon and tough connective tissue at the base of the calf muscle combine there. The heel bone is where the Achilles tendon attaches (calcaneus).

For a variety of reasons, your calves could feel tight. Walking from



place to place or engaging in vigorous activities regularly strains these muscles.

When they aren't flexible as they should be, it may impact how you move and how much pressure you put on other parts of your body. For example, your foot, ankle, and knee might not operate as they should. As a result, you can be prevented from participating in your favorite activities because of tightness, pain, or even damage.

Calf stretch exercises can help with calf muscle tightness. Many such exercises can be done readily at home without specific equipment like the ones listed below.

- **Gastroc Stretch on Wall**

Step 1 – Stand in an upright position while facing the wall.



Step 2 – Take a giant step to the front and get into the pose that looks like you are trying to push the wall. During this whole process, focus on the calf muscles of one of the legs.



Step 3 – Stay in this position for 20 seconds

- *5 reps for each leg*
- *3 Sets*
- *It can be done multiple times a day*
- *5 days a week*

- **Soleus Stretch on wall**

Step 1 – Stand with face towards the wall.



Step 2 – Step on the wall with a toe while the heel of the same foot is resting on the floor. Bend slightly forward to apply greater pressure and stretch the soleus. Then repeat for the other leg.



- *4-6 times for each leg*
- *3 Sets*
- *Once-daily*

- 5 days a week

- **Standing gastric stretch on step**

Step 1 – Stand in the front of the step.



Step 2 – Move forward one foot and put the toes on the step while the heel should be hanging in the air.



Step 3 – Bend forward to move heel downwards while toes rest on the step to ensure gastric stretch.



- Repeat 8-10 times
- 3 Sets
- Once-daily
- 5 days a week

- **Long sitting calf stretch with strap**

Step 1 – Get seated on the floor with both legs straight. Wrap the towel around the ball of your foot just below your toes.



Step 2 – Lightly pull on the towel, allowing your foot to gradually bend up toward your knee while keeping your knee straight. You should feel a slight stretching feeling in the hind of your lower leg. Depending on where the muscle or tendon is particularly tight, you may feel the stretch behind your heel or knee. Hold the stretched position for 25 to 30 seconds, and then slowly release the stretch.



- 4-6 reps
- 3 sets
- Once-daily
- 5 days a week

- **Standing toe dorsiflexion stretch**

Step 1 –Dorsiflexion occurs in your ankle when you draw your toes back toward your shins. You contract the shinbones and flex the ankle joint when you dorsiflex your foot. You can also dorsiflex your foot by lifting the ball of your foot off the ground while standing, keeping your heel planted into the ground.



- Repeat 3-5 times for each toe
- 3 sets in a row
- Once-daily
- 5 days a week

- **Standing anterior tibialis stretch**

Step 1 – Stand facing the support like a chair and hold it tight.



Step 2 – Next, move one of your legs backward, the leg you want to stretch with the upper part of the foot or toe facing the ground (done by squeezing calve muscles). Next, put some pressure on the toe to ensure that the anterior tibialis gets stretched.



- Repeat 4-6 times for each leg
- 3 sets in a row
- Once-daily
- 5 days a week

*Prepared by **Dr. Saint-Vil**
Last review and update: 07/03/2022*