

Calf Stretches

To do effective stretching exercises, hold each stretch for at least 15 to 30 seconds. Don't bounce while you stretch. Just relax and breathe freely.

It's a good idea to do these stretches on both legs, even if you only have problems with one of your Achilles tendons. Stretch one leg first, and then the other.

Toe stretch

1. **Sit in a chair** and extend your affected leg so that your heel is on the floor.
2. **With your hand**, reach down and pull your big toe up and back (toward your ankle and away from the floor).
3. **Hold the position** for at least 15 to 30 seconds.
4. **Repeat 2 to 4 times** a session, up to 5 sessions a day.



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The next three exercises are often done in a progression (meaning you do the most gentle exercise for a few days, then move on to the more vigorous exercises). Start with the calf-plantar fascia stretch and then move on to the calf chair stretch and the stair stretch. Talk to your health professional about how long you should do each one before moving on to the next one.

Calf Plantar Fascia Stretch

1. **Sit with your legs extended** and the knees straight.
2. **Loop an elastic band or towel around the leg** to be stretched. Position the band or towel so that it goes around your foot just under the toes.
3. **Hold each end of the towel** or band in each hand, with your hands positioned above your knees. A towel will give you a more effective stretch.
4. **Pull back with the towel** or band so that your foot stretches toward you.
5. **Hold the position** for at least 15 to 30 seconds.
6. **Repeat 2 to 4 times** a session, up to 5 sessions a day.



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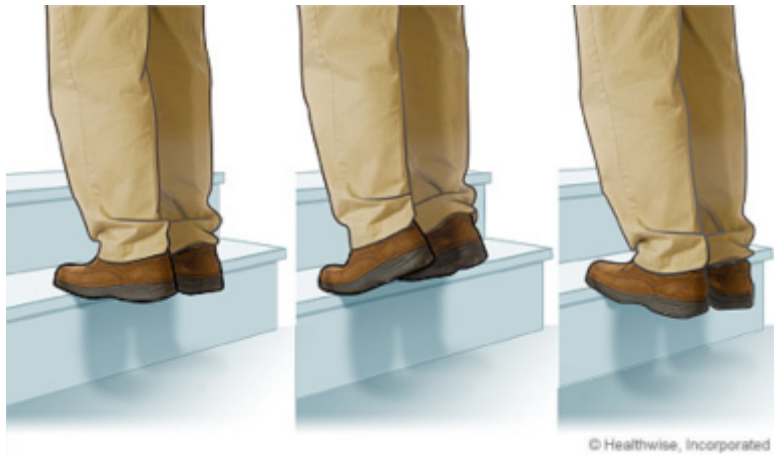
Floor stretch

1. **Stand about 2 feet from a wall**, and place your hands on the wall at about shoulder height. Or you can stand behind a kitchen-type chair and place your hands on the back of a chair for balance.
2. **Step back with the leg you want to stretch**; keep the leg straight, and press your left into the floor with your toe turned slightly in.
3. **Lean forward**, and bend your other leg slightly. Feel the stretch in the Achilles tendon of your back leg. Hold for at least 15 to 30 seconds.
4. **Repeat 2 to 4 times a session**, up to 5 sessions a day.



Stair stretch

1. **Stand with the balls of both feet on the edge of a stair** or curb (or even a medium phone book), with at least one hand holding on to something solid, such as a banister or handrail, to help you keep your balance.
2. **Keeping your affected leg straight**, slowly let that heel hang down off of the stair or curb until you feel a stretch in the back of your calf and/or Achilles area. Some of your weight should still be on the other leg.
3. **Hold this position** for at least 15 to 30 seconds.
4. **Repeat 2 to 4 times a session**, up to 5 times a day or whenever your Achilles tendon starts to feel tight.



This stretch can also be done with your knee slightly bent. Stretches should not be painful.

This information is not intended to replace the advice of a doctor. Since specific guidelines may vary, consult with your physician to find out which guidelines are recommended for you. Healthwise disclaims any liability for the decisions you make based on this information.

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