

# Daily Foot & Ankle Exercises

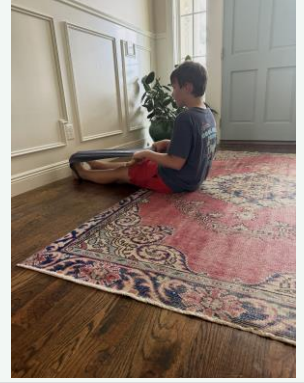
Perform this routine twice daily • Justin Albright, DPM, FACFAS

## 1 Sit | Stretch

*Why: Stretches the calf and Achilles tendon.*

Sit on the floor or in a chair if needed, paying attention to your posture and keeping your back straight. Use a shower towel (not an elastic band) placed around the ball of your foot, just below the toes. Pull the towel to bring your toes upright, and pull your elbows back to your sides to hold your lower back posture. Hold for 10 seconds, repeat 4 times, then switch legs and repeat.

**Hold 10 sec × 4, both legs**, twice daily



*The next 3 exercises are done standing, leaning against a wall, exercising both sides at once. The further your feet are from the wall, the more intense the stretch. Do these barefoot, or in the shoes/orthotics you normally wear for pain control. For each: one rep per second, 25–30 reps, with a brief pause at the top of each rep.*

## 2 Toe Raises

*Why: Strengthens the muscles along the shin (tibialis anterior).*

Lean your shoulders squarely against the wall, then step forward, away from the wall, keeping your shoulders in place. Keep your heels on the ground and lift your toes upward toward your nose. You'll feel the muscles tighten along your shin.

**25–30 reps**, twice daily



## 3 Heel Raises | Knee Straight

*Why: Strengthens the calf muscle (gastrocnemius).*

Facing the wall, extend your arms and lean against it. Step backward to the point of maximum stretch where you can still keep your heels on the ground. Raise your heels up onto your toes.

**25–30 reps**, twice daily



## 4 Heel Raises | Knees Bent

*Why: Targets the deeper calf muscle (soleus).*

Facing the wall, extend your arms and lean against it. This time, bend your knees slightly to relax the upper calf and shift the work to other muscle groups. Step backward to the point of maximum stretch where you can still keep your heels on the ground. Raise your heels up onto your toes.

**25–30 reps**, twice daily

