

**LOWER LEG STRENGTHENING EXERCISES**

**Calf Raise**



- Stand with the feet about shoulder width apart and toes pointing straight forwards
- Keep the knees straight as you raise your heels off the floor
- Lift your heels as high as you can and then return slowly to the starting position

**Variations & progressions**

- Progress by performing the exercise on a step, with only the toes on the step as shown
- Hold onto the wall or banister as you raise the heels and then drop them down below the level of the step before returning to the starting position
- Alternatively perform on a single leg

**Muscles worked** - Gastrocnemius, Soleus

**Calf Raise with a Bent Knee**

- Stand with the feet about shoulder width apart and toes pointing straight forwards
- Hold on to a wall and bend the knees slightly to relax the Gastrocnemius muscle
- Raise your heels off the floor as high as you can
- Return slowly to the starting position

**Variations & progressions**

- Progress by performing the exercise on a step, with only the toes on the step
- Hold onto the wall or banister as you raise the heels and then drop them down below the level of the step before returning to the starting position

- Alternatively perform on a single leg

**Muscles worked** - Soleus, Tibialis Posterior

**Related injuries** - Calf strain, Tight calves, Achilles tendon tear, Achilles tendon rupture, Achilles tendinitis

## **Toe Raises**



- Sit on a chair with the knees bent and feet flat on the floor
- Lift the toes and forefoot of both feet off the ground, keeping the heel in contact
- Lift as high as you can and really squeeze at the top and point the toes to the ceiling
- Return to the starting position

## **Variations & progressions**

- Perform using only one foot

**Muscles worked** - Tibialis anterior, Extensor digitorum longus, Extensor hallucis longus

**Related injuries** - Shin splints , Ankle sprain

## **Heel toe walking**

Is a great exercise for the ankle and calf muscles. It will strengthen all muscles of the lower leg, as well as help improve proprioception or balance. Walk slowly across the floor. Start with a heel strike and once you get to the forefoot push-off, come up onto the toes. Swing the other leg forward and heel strike with the next foot to continue.

## Lunges



- Step forwards with one foot in a long stride
- Make sure your feet are in line and pointing straight forwards
- Keep your back upright as you slowly bend and lower the back knee towards the floor, raising the heel off the floor
- At the same time bend the front knee, making sure it doesn't go past your toes
- Don't let the back knee touch the floor before returning to the starting position

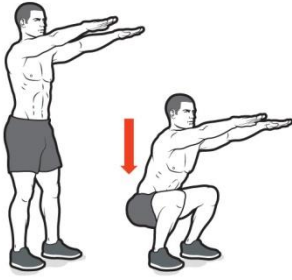
### **Variations & progressions**

- Use a dumbbell in each hand
- Use a barbell over the shoulders
- Walking lunges - after completing one lunge as above, swing the back leg forwards so that it becomes the front leg and repeat

**Muscles worked** - Rectus Femoris, Vastus Medialis, Vastus Lateralis, Vastus Intermedius, Biceps Femoris, Semimembranosus, Semitendinosus, Gluteus Maximus, Iliopsoas, Gastrocnemius, Soleus

**Related injuries** - Quad strain, Contusion, ACL rupture , PCL rupture , Meniscus tear, Hamstring strain, Patella tendonitis (jumpers knee), Patellofemoral pain syndrome

## Squats



- Stand with your feet shoulder width apart and toes pointing straight forwards
- Keep the back straight as you initiate movement at your hips
- Push your buttocks out behind you and bend your knees
- Do not let your knees move in front of your toes
- Do not squat deeper than a 90 degree (right angle) at the knee
- Start with shallow squats and increase gradually
- Return to the starting position

**Muscles worked** - . Rectus Femoris, Vastus Medialis, Vastus Lateralis, Vastus Intermedius, Biceps Femoris, Semimembranosus, Semitendinosus, Gluteus Maximus, Iliopsoas, Gastrocnemius, Soleus