

There are certain activities in the work place that may contribute to developing a sore ankle. These could include repetitive activities at work, walking or standing for long periods of time, using stairs, lifting objects or operating machine tools. The nature of these activities can, if not addressed lead to the gradual build up of tension and stiffness in the ankle. These exercises have been designed by our team of Chartered Physiotherapists to assist in preventing the onset of tension and stiffness or to ease any pain if it occurs.

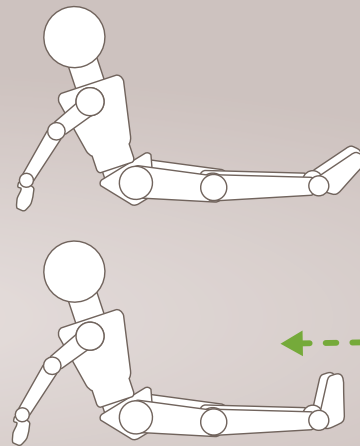
1

#### Flexing and extending the ankle

This is a great, gentle exercise for the ankle. As some of us sit for long periods of time or work in manual environments, the ankle can become a little stiff and the ability to flex and extend the ankle fully can reduce. This simple exercise will stretch out the tissue around the ankle and lift a lot of that pressure and stress on the area.

- Sit with both legs out in front of you and lean on your hands behind you for support with a slight bend at the knee
- Pull your toes towards you as far as you can, you may feel a stretch behind the ankle
- Hold the stretch for 2 seconds and then point your toes down as far as you can and then hold this new position for 2 seconds
- Pull your toes up towards you 10 times and point your toes 10 times

If you do this just once per day, you will really help reduce the gradual build up of tightness in the ankle and maintain the correct range of movement.



2

#### Turning the ankle in and out

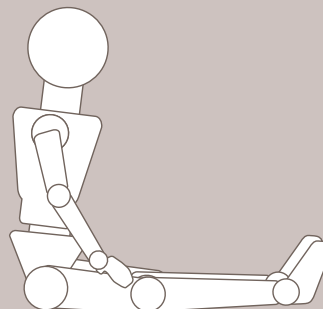
Over time, as we get a bit older you can start to lose some movement in the ankle and the ability to fully turn the ankle in and out is one of those movements.

These two movements known as 'inversion' and 'eversion' are very important to maintain. If you are unable to fully turn the ankle in and out, this can really affect the general mobility of the ankle.

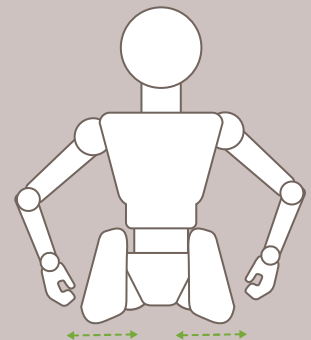
- Sit up straight with a slight curve in the base of the spine
- Without moving the knees, move your feet and toes inwards i.e. towards the other foot. Return to the start position then move your feet and toes outwards i.e. away from the other foot
- Turn the ankle in and out 10 times and hold each movement for 2 seconds

If you do this just once per day, you will really help reduce the gradual build up of tightness in the ankle and maintain this very important movement.

Step 1



Step 2



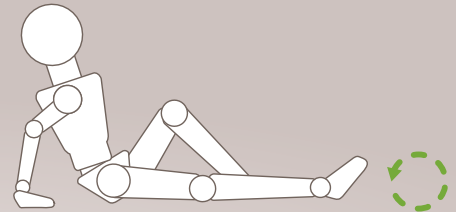
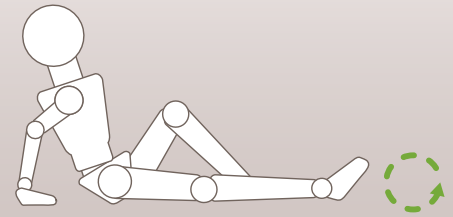
### 3

#### Turning the ankle clockwise and anti clockwise

This exercise actually combines the previous 2 movements and really helps to maintain the overall movement in the ankle.

- Sit with both legs straight and lean on your hands behind you for support
- Trace circles with your feet by turning your ankles in one direction without moving the knees
- Return to the start position and repeat in the other direction
- Perform this exercise for 1 min: 30 seconds in one direction and 30 seconds in the other

If you do this exercise just once per day, you will really assist in preventing the gradually build up of stiffness and tightness in the ankle.



### 4

#### Calf and achilles stretch

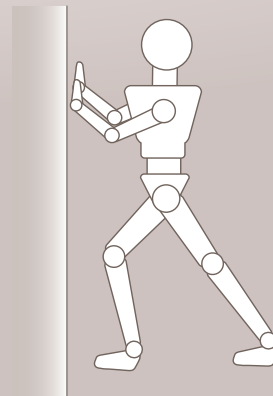
The calf and achilles are prone to becoming stiff and tight and when this happens it can cause more stress on the ankle. The calf attaches onto the achilles tendon which, in turn attaches onto the back of the heel, so when the calf and achilles become stiff and tight it can affect the ankle joint.

The calf and achilles can become tight over time for those working in both sedentary and manual environments.

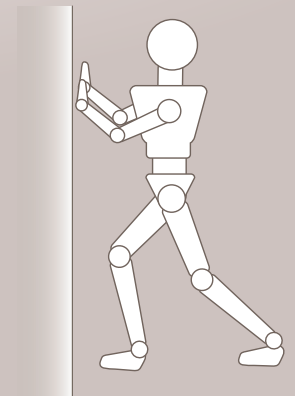
- Stand and place both hands on a wall, with your feet about half a meter from the wall
- Place one leg behind the other and lean your body forwards until you feel a stretch in your calf and achilles and hold for 5 seconds
- Whilst stretching the calf keep your knee straight and your heel on the floor as you lean forwards
- After this if you then slowly bend the knee whilst keeping the heel on the floor you may feel a stretch in the lower achilles area, hold this for a further 5 seconds
- Repeat this 5 times on each side once per day

By keeping the calf and achilles flexible, it can reduce the stress on the area and again reduce the likelihood of ankle pain.

Step 1



Step 2



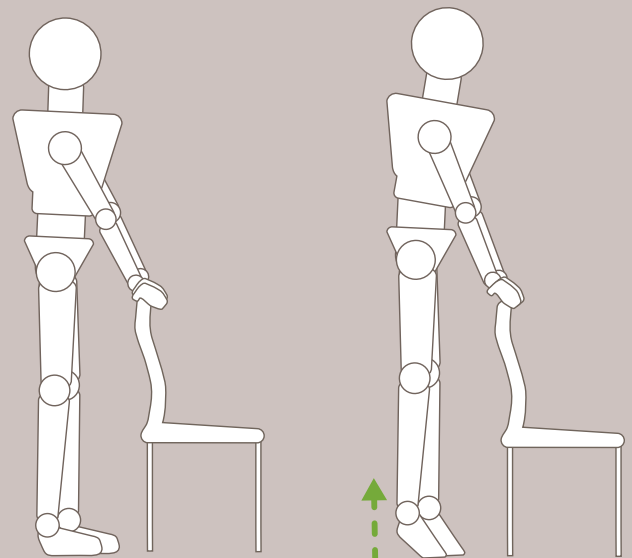
### 5

#### Strengthening the calf

You may have heard of Physiotherapists talking about strengthening the calf muscle, well it is very important to keep this muscle strong whether your job is sedentary or manual. A strong calf muscle really helps to maintain a strong ankle.

- Start by doing this exercise on 2 feet
- Stand using a chair or something similar for balance
- Rise up onto the ball of both feet by tightening your calf muscles and then slowly lowering and repeat
- Start with doing 1 set of 10 and build up gradually to 5 sets of 10

Once you are comfortable with this exercise you can progress to rise up on 1 foot and then lower slowly on the same foot. You can also try this exercise with the knees slightly bent. Please remember to keep yourself upright when you do this exercise and do not lean forward.



## 6

### Improving your balance

Maintaining the balance around the ankle is very important, particularly if you have to walk on an uneven surface.

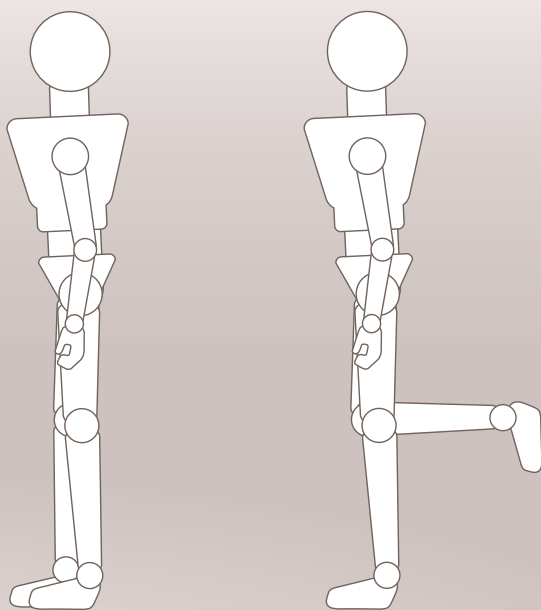
People are often surprised to find that their balance may not be as good as they expected and this simple exercise can really help to improve this.

- Lift one leg off the ground so you are standing on one foot and maintain this for 5 seconds
- In the early stages you may need to put the other foot down as you lose your balance, however with practice you will get better at this
- Once you have practiced the balance on one leg, repeat on the other leg
- Practice this exercise each day until you can comfortably stand on 1 leg and maintain your balance for 30 seconds

You may find that you are better on one foot than the other.

Like all of the exercises, do this carefully and slowly, particularly if you are not used to doing this.

Please remember to keep yourself upright when you do this exercise and do not lean forward.



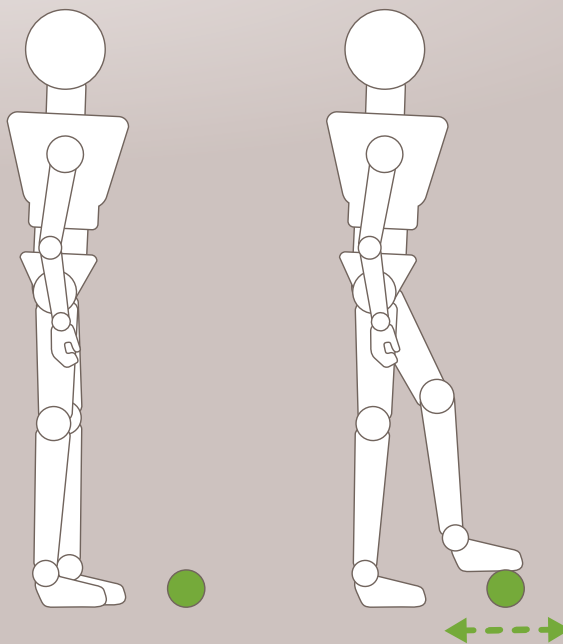
## 7

### Massaging the feet

When standing or walking for long periods, the sole of the foot can become tight and this can in turn lead to foot and ankle problems.

This exercise can be done at home at the end of a working day to keep the area supple.

- Place a tennis ball or something similar on the floor and with one foot on top of this roll over the tennis ball from heel to toe. Gently press on the tennis ball as you do the movement
- Start by doing this for 1 – 2 mins and build up gradually to 5 mins on either foot



Overall, remember to do these exercises slowly and carefully and also remember by maintaining the movement and strength in your ankles, you really will help to reduce the likelihood of ankle problems.

Please be aware Physio Med are not liable for your health and wellbeing as a consequence of following our exercises. Please consult your doctor and or physiotherapist before starting any new exercise or musculoskeletal rehabilitation programme.