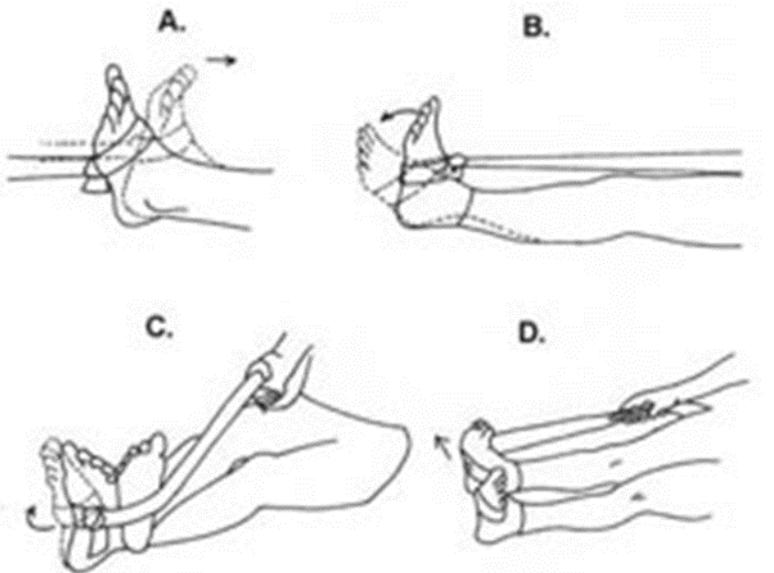


Ankle Strengthening Exercises

These exercises can be used after an injury or for injury prevention, which is why the word “injured” is in quotations throughout the directions. “Injured” refers to the ankle you are exercising, which may be one or both.

TheraBand Exercises (Ankle 4-ways): 3 Sets of 10 in each direction

-With these exercises, keep leg straight out, knee flat on table, and foot/ankle off the edge of the table. The goal is to use the muscles to strengthen the ankle, not working out entire lower leg. Try to keep lower leg from moving or “doing the work” during these exercises. The exercise band should be wrapped around the ball of the “injured” foot during the exercises. The amount of tension you hold the band with assist the resistance of the exercise, to which you can pull more or less. Make sure there is not slack in the band during exercises.



Thera-Band strengthening exercises for the lower leg

A) **Dorsiflexion:** The pull or resistance should be pulling the foot down, so that you have to pull your foot/toes up towards you. (You may need someone to hold the band for you)

-You can also anchor the other end of the tubing by tying a knot in the tubing, placing it between a door and frame then closing the door.

B) **Plantarflexion:** Hold band in hand so that the resistance is pulling the foot up towards you. Push foot down as if to push a gas pedal.

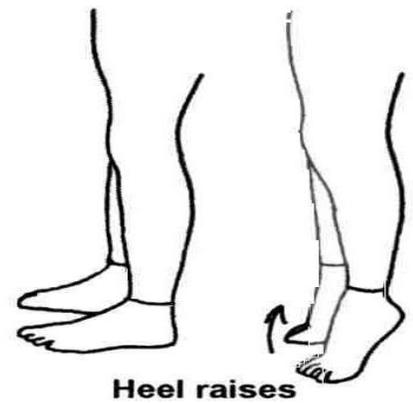
C) **Inversion:** Cross legs so the “injured” foot in under the “uninjured” leg, loop the band around the “uninjured” foot, holding the end of the band tight in hands. The resistance should want to pull the “injured” foot towards to other foot. Push the foot/ankle away from other foot.

D) **Eversion:** With both legs straight out about shoulder width apart, wrap band around the ball of the “injured” foot then loop the other foot and hold band. The resistance should pull the foot in towards the other foot. You will want to push “injured” foot out away from the other foot.

Heel Raises: Start with 3 sets of 10 repetitions.

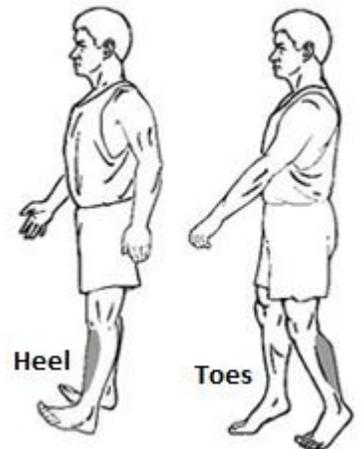
Raise up on to your toes and hold for about 3 to 5 seconds then lower heels back down.

Increasing difficulty by: using only one leg or changing ground surface (uneven surface, off the edge of a step, etc...)



Heel/Toe Walking: Without Shoes, walk on heels or toes.

Repeat 30 steps for each.



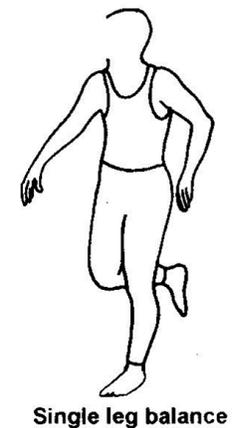
Jump Rope: May be done as double leg, single leg, or alternating feet.

Single Leg Balance: Standing without any support, balance on the “injured” leg. Try to hold for 15 to 30 seconds or until you fatigue (your ankle gets too tired). Rest for a few seconds then repeat 3 to 5 times.

Increase Difficulty: -Close your eyes while balancing

- Bend you knee

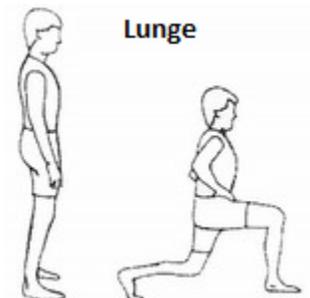
-Change the surface (on a towel, Airex pad, bosu ball, etc...)



Forward Lunges: Starting with both feet together, step one foot forward while bending rear knee so that it almost touches the ground. The front knee should be bent so the thigh is parallel to the ground and the knee remains behind the toes. Alternate knees, repeat 2 sets of 10 lunges on each leg.

-Increase difficulty: - twist your torso

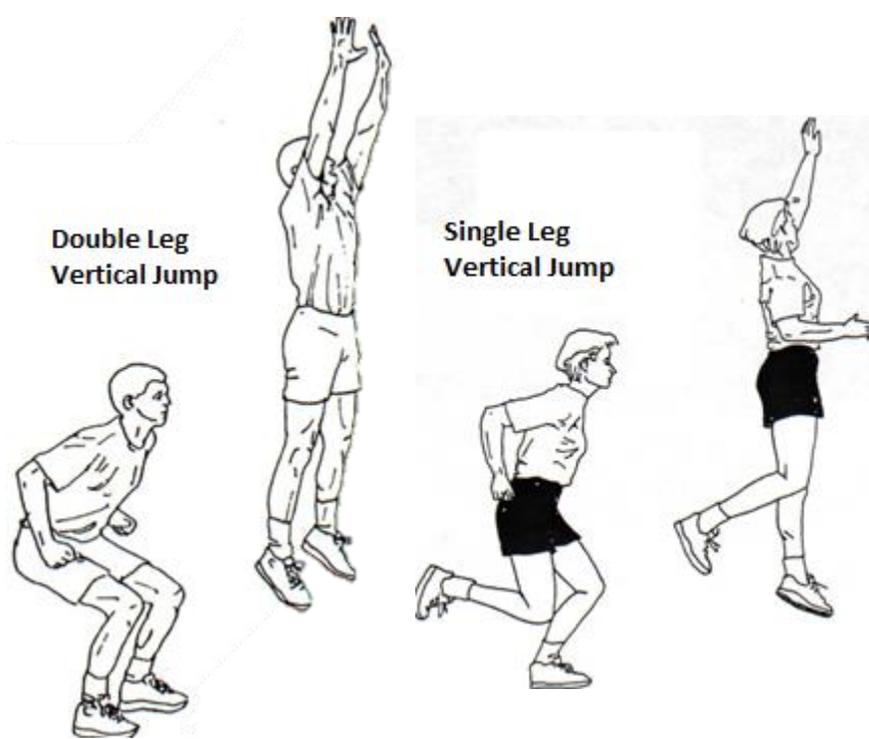
-add hand weights



Vertical Jumps/Hops: Standing with weight balanced between both legs, hop up and land with pressure evenly on both legs, slightly bending knees as you land. You should land approximately in the same place you started.

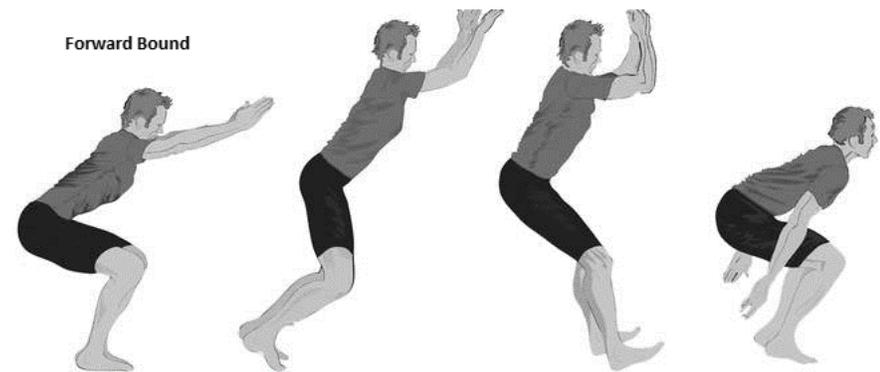
Repeat 3 sets of 10.

-Increase the difficulty: progress to single leg vertical jumps which should be done on the “injured” and “uninjured” leg.



Forward/Backward Bounds:

Similar to the vertical jumps but now you will hop forward or backwards from your starting point. Once again, **increase the difficulty by progressing from double to single leg.**



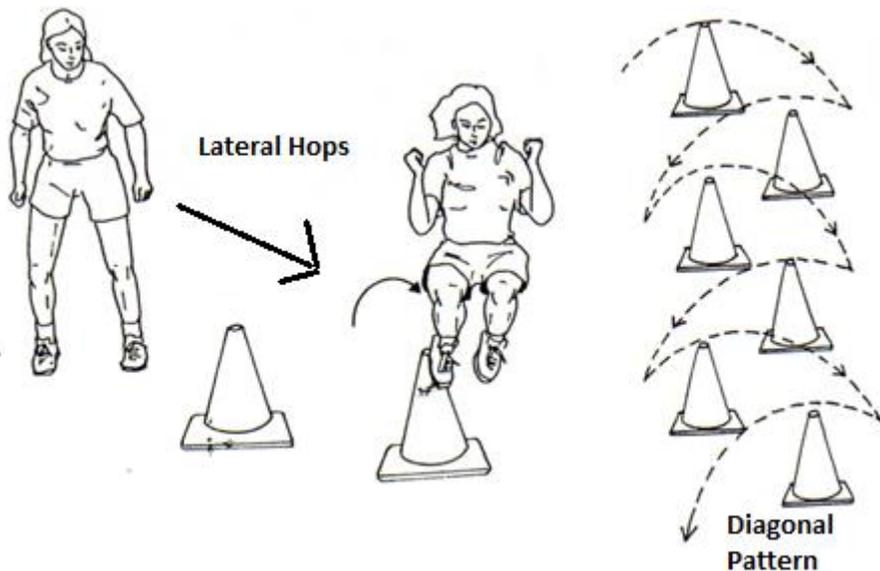
Lateral Hops/Bounds: Starting equally balanced on both feet, hop laterally or “to the side.”

Do 10 hops to the right and 10 hops to the left, facing forward in the same direction.

-Increase the difficulty:

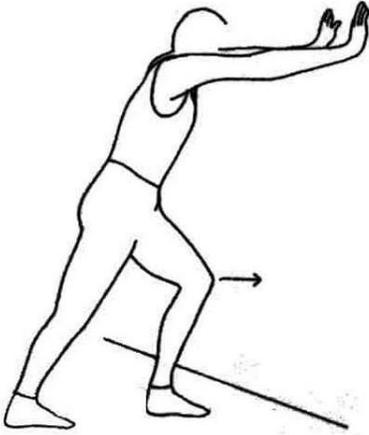
- hop *over* something (towel, block, object, etc..)
- progress to single leg
- hop in a diagonal pattern forward
- try adding an agility ladder drill

**If hops are a little too difficult, start with stepping side to side.



Stretches (Just as important as strengthening!)

Here we will focus on the calf muscles; the gastrocnemius and the soleus. There are a few variations for each.



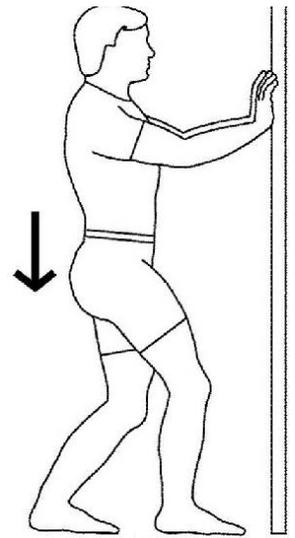
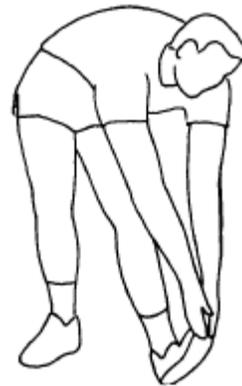
Standing calf stretch

Standing Calf Stretch

<-**First:** stand facing a wall, your front knee bent and your back leg straight. Lean forward and **hold 20 to 30 seconds**, rest a few seconds and repeat.

->**Next:** Slightly bend your back leg, directing pressure downward. You should feel a little deeper stretch in the upper calf area.

-You can also stand reaching down and hold you toes to stretch.



Special thanks to the organizations in which this Information was gathered from:

Princeton University Athletic Medicine; Ankle Sprain Protocol

New West Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Center; Ankle Injury Rehabilitation Protocol

Camino Medical Group; Ankle Exercises