

## Accelerated Ankle Fracture Rehabilitation and Conditioning

### Purpose of Program

After an injury or surgery, an exercise conditioning program will help you return to daily activities and enjoy a more active, healthy lifestyle. Following a well-structured conditioning program will also help you return to sports and other recreational activities.

This is a general conditioning program that provides a wide range of exercises that is to begin two weeks following your surgery. At this point the splint will be removed and you will be placed into a boot. **You may not bear any weight on the ankle for another 4 weeks**, however, at this time you may begin with these provided exercises to safely regain range of motion and early strength in the injured foot and ankle.

**Strength:** Strengthening the muscles that support your lower leg, foot, and ankle will help keep your ankle joint stable. Keeping these muscles strong can relieve foot and ankle pain and prevent further injury.

**Flexibility:** Stretching the muscles that you strengthen is important for restoring range of motion and preventing injury. Gently stretching after strengthening exercises can help reduce muscle soreness and keep your muscles long and flexible.

**Target Muscles:** The muscle groups of the lower leg are targeted in this conditioning program, as well as the tendons and ligaments that control movement in your feet. These include:

- Gastrocnemius-soleus complex (calf)
- Anterior tibialis (shin)
- Posterior tibialis (center of calf)
- Peroneus longus (outside of lower calf)
- Peroneus brevis (outside of lower calf)
- Soleus (calf)
- Dorsiflexors (ankle)
- Plantar flexors (ankle)
- Invertors (ankle)
- Evertors (ankle)
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**Length of program:** This foot and ankle conditioning program should be continued for 4 to 6 weeks, unless otherwise specified by your doctor or physical therapist. After your recovery, these exercises can be continued as a maintenance program for lifelong protection and health of your feet and lower legs. Performing the exercises three to five days a week will maintain strength and range of motion in your foot and ankle.

**Do not ignore pain:** You should not feel pain during an exercise. Talk to your doctor or physical therapist if you have any pain while exercising.

**Ask questions:** If you are not sure how to do an exercise, or how often to do it, contact your doctor or physical therapist.

### Golf Ball Roll

**Repetitions:** 10

**Days per week:** Daily

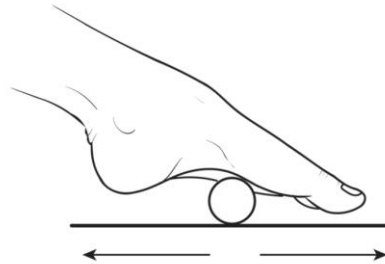
**Main muscles worked:** Plantar fascia ligament, *you should feel this exercise along the bottom of your foot*

**Equipment needed:** Golf ball

Step-by-step directions

- Sit on a stable chair with both feet planted on the floor.
- Roll a golf ball under the arch of your affected foot for 2 minutes.

**Tip** Sit up tall and keep your foot toward your chair.



### Towel Stretch

**Repetitions:** 2 sets of 10

**Days per week:** 5-6

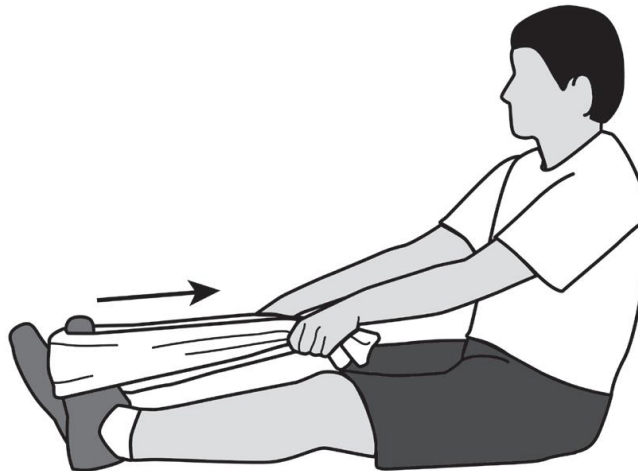
**Main muscles worked:** Gastrocnemius-soleus complex, *you should feel this stretch in your calf and into your heel*

**Equipment needed:** Hand towel

Step-by-step directions

- Sit on the floor with both legs out in front of you.
- Loop a towel around the ball of your affected foot and grasp the ends of the towel in your hands.
- Keep your affected leg straight and pull the towel toward you.
- Hold for 30 seconds and then relax for 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.

**Tip** Sit up tall and keep your legs straight.



### Marble Pickup

**Repetitions** 20

**Days per week** Daily

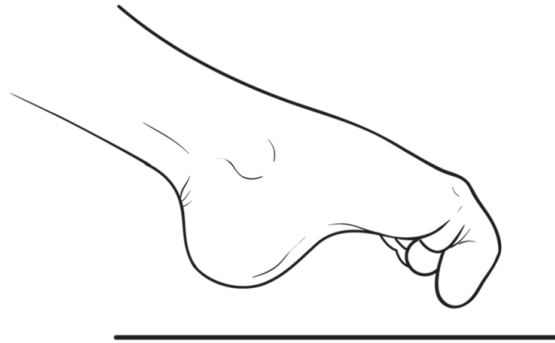
**Main muscles worked:** Plantar flexors, *you should feel this exercise at the top of your foot and toes*

**Equipment needed:** 20 marbles

Step-by-step directions

- Sit with both feet flat and place 20 marbles on the floor in front of you.
- Use your toes to pick up one marble at a time and place into a bowl.
- Repeat until you have picked up all the marbles.

**Tip** Do not place the marbles too far out in front or to the side.



### Towel Curls

**Repetitions:** 5

**Days per week:** Daily

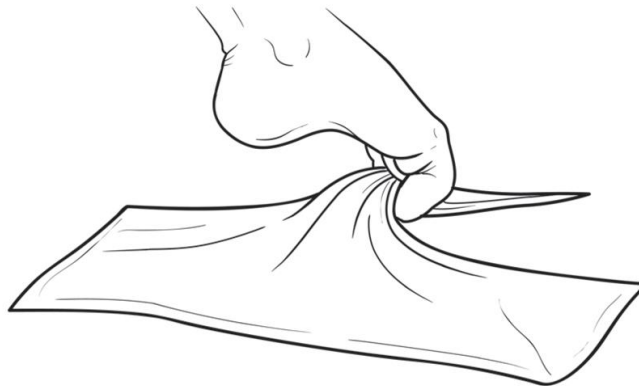
**Main muscles worked:** Plantar flexors, *you should feel this exercise at the top of your foot and your toes*

**Equipment needed:** Hand towel

Step-by-step directions

- Sit with both feet flat and place a small towel on the floor in front of you.
- Grab the center of the towel with your toes and curl the towel toward you.
- Relax and repeat.

**Tip** You can make this exercise more challenging by placing a weight on the edge of the towel.



Ankle Dorsiflexion/Plantar Flexion

**Repetitions:** 3 sets of 10

**Days per week:** 3

**Main muscles worked:** Anterior tibialis, gastrocnemius-soleus complex, *you should feel this exercise at your calf, shin, the back of your heel, and the top of your foot*

**Equipment needed:** Use an elastic stretch band of comfortable resistance

Step-by-step directions

- Sit on the floor with your legs straight out in front of you.
- For dorsiflexion, anchor the elastic band on a chair or table leg, then wrap it around your foot.
- Pull your toes toward you and slowly return to the start position. Repeat 10 times.
- For plantar flexion, wrap the elastic band around your foot and hold the ends in your hand.
- Gently point your toes and slowly return to the start position. Repeat 10 times.

**Tip** Keep your leg straight and heel on the floor for support.

