

Foot and ankle exercises

Information for patients

Here is some advice to help you to keep your feet healthy:

One of the things you can do to support your foot health in addition to, or as an alternative to, wearing arch supports is foot arch strengthening exercises:

1. Sit in a chair with both feet placed flat on the floor.
2. Raise the arch of your foot by pulling your big toe toward your heel.
Your toes should not curl and your toes and heel need to stay on the ground.
3. Hold the position for 5 seconds then relax and repeat 10 times on each foot.
Do this 3-5 times throughout the day.

There is only a very small movement with this exercise so it may take a few goes to get the hang of it.

Variations can be performed by moving the feet farther away from you or turning the foot inward or outward to challenge the muscles from different positions. Once you feel comfortable doing this you can gradually progress to performing the exercise while standing and then eventually from a single-leg standing position.



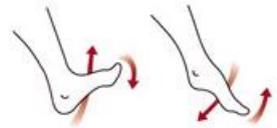
Stand on your toes - Simply standing on your toes as much as you can throughout the day will strengthen the muscles in and around your foot. Walk around, bend your knees, and generally “rise up” whenever you think about it (and can get away with it).

Balance on one leg - Balance exercises are good for strengthening your feet and ankles. Without leaning to one side lift one foot behind you. You want to be able to remain still and balanced for up to 30 seconds on each leg. To make it more challenging, add leg lifts, knee bends or rising up to your toes on your standing foot. You could also try gently moving your head to one side when in these positions. It is important when doing these that you don't wobble at your hips.

It is a good idea to stretch out your calves to counter-balance a lot of these strengthening exercises and keep your legs from becoming too tight or imbalanced.

Flexibility - The following exercises are good to improve the flexibility of the feet, aiding circulation and balance:

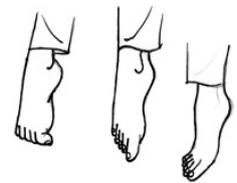
1. Move your ankle upwards towards the ceiling as far as you can, then point your foot down to the floor as far as you can. Repeat 5 times for each foot



2. Move your ankle around slowly in a large circle. Do this for 30 seconds for each foot. You could also try spelling out the alphabet with your foot.



3. With your foot pointing towards the floor, bend your toes downwards and then upwards as far as you can. Repeat 5 times for each foot.



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