

ANKLE STRENGTHENING PROGRAM

Program Time: 20 min.

Recommended: 3x a week

Manuel A. Escalante, Jr. BS, ATC, EMT

Model: Nathan Swift BS

Note: This program is not meant to replace an evaluation by your coach, athletic trainer, or physician if you have an ankle injury. The program will help strengthen your ankles, but will not necessarily prevent injury. All exercises should be done pain free. Please see your coach, athletic trainer, or physician if you have any problems with, or questions about, the program.

Gastrocnemius Stretch

Lean against a wall with right foot behind you. Keep right knee locked and heel touching the ground. Lean forward until you feel a stretch along your calf. (You may have to move the foot closer to the wall or further back in order to feel the stretch) A stretch should NEVER HURT! Attain a good, pain free stretch and hold for 15 seconds then switch and stretch left leg, repeat 4 times.



Soleus Stretch

(This is a stretch for the soleus muscle, the 'deeper' calf muscle.)

Lean against a wall with your right foot behind you. BEND your right knee, and keep the heel in contact with the ground. Lean forward until you feel a stretch along your calf. (You may have to move the foot closer to the wall or further back in order to feel the stretch) A stretch should NEVER HURT! Attain a good, pain free stretch and hold for 15 seconds then switch and stretch left leg, repeat 4 times.



Anterior Tibialis Stretch

Sit in a chair and cross your right leg onto your left thigh. Your malleolus, or 'ankle bone', should be about 2 inches off your thigh. With your left hand, grasp the top of your foot and pull your foot towards your left side, making sure movement occurs at the ankle joint. A stretch should NEVER HURT! Attain a good, pain free stretch and hold for 15 seconds then switch and stretch left leg, repeat 4 times.



Range of Motion

Sit on a table, bed, or couch and rest right leg so that your foot hangs 2 inches off ledge. Using your toes as a pencil, draw small circles in the air, clockwise then counterclockwise, for 15 seconds in each direction. Repeat one more time for each direction. Now draw large circles in a similar fashion, again clockwise then counterclockwise for 15 seconds in each direction, then repeat. Movement should be occurring at the ankle joint. Repeat exercises with left foot.



Towel Scrunches

Sit in a chair and stretch a towel on the floor in front of you. Begin with right foot and keep heel on the ground and off towel. Now, using your toes scrunch the towel towards you. Scrunch the towel as far as possible, then straighten and repeat a total of 3 times. Switch to left foot and repeat.

(When exercise becomes easy, place a book on the far end of the towel and then scrunch.)



Towel Scoop

Sit in a chair and stretch a towel out to the right side. Keep heel off towel and on ground. Now using your right foot, scoop the towel towards you, moving foot towards the middle of your body. Straighten and repeat for a total of 3 times. Switch to left foot and repeat. (When exercise becomes easy, place a book on the far end of the towel and then scrunch.)



Leg Swings

Stand with feet a little closer than shoulder width apart. Balance on left foot. Swing right leg forward (it should be no more than a foot and a half off ground) then back until it passes behind your left foot. Continue swings for 15 seconds. Switch to left foot and repeat. Do 4 times for each leg. Movement should be at the hip with the knee locked, or slightly bent. In a similar manner, swing leg at an angle, away from body, do both legs 15 seconds, 4 times each. Repeat motion across body, again 4 times for 15 seconds each. (When exercise becomes easy perform with eyes closed. Later, try leg swings while playing catch with a ball.)



Toe Raises

Stand in front of a chair and place hands on chair back. Raise up on your toes and hold for two seconds, lower until heels touch the ground (take about two seconds to lower). Do 2 sets of 10 repetitions. When exercise becomes easy, perform exercise with one foot at a time.



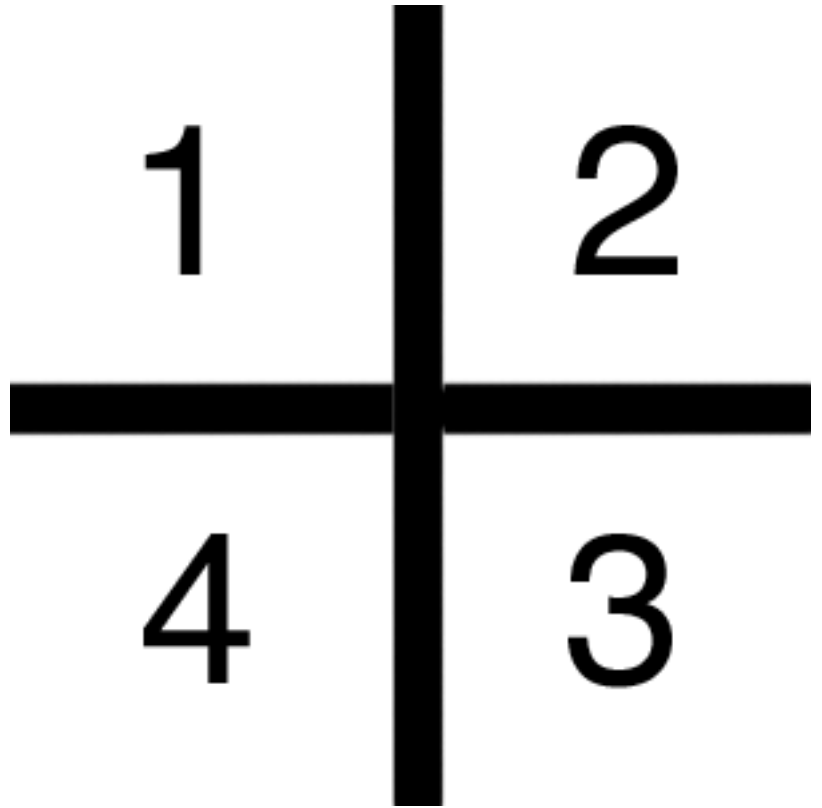
Toe Taps

Sit in chair. Begin with right foot. Keep heel on the ground. Raise toes up toward body, then lower so toes touch ground. Perform 2 sets of 10 repetitions. Repeat toe taps for left foot.



Jumps

Make a cross on the ground using two strips of tape. Label quadrants 1-4. Place both feet in quadrant 1 and jump into quadrant 2. Then go from 2 to 3, then 3 to 4 and finally 4 back to 1. Stay facing forward the entire time. Ensure you leave off the balls of the feet and land on the balls of the feet. Repeat exercise but jump from 1 to 4, 4 to 3, 3 to 2, 2 to 1. Do 10 jumps total, 5 in each direction. Begin slowly, then gradually increase jumping speed. When exercise becomes easy, perform jumps with one foot at a time.



HAPPY STRENGTHENING!