

# Stretching and strengthening

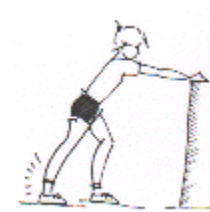


Stretching should form part of a complete warm up and cool down routine. For further information see our [warm up facts sheet](#).

The following are examples of some stretches for the muscles at the back of the knee:

## Stretching

### Gastrocnemius stretch (upper calf)



- keep toes pointing forward
- your knees should be lined up over your feet
- try not to let your feet 'roll in'
- you should feel the stretch at the top of your calf.

### Soleus stretch (lower calf)

- bring your feet slightly closer together
- bend your back knee, keeping your foot in the same position
- you should now feel the stretch lower in your calf.



### Hamstring stretch



- keep your head up and your back straight
- feel the stretch in the back of your thigh
- push your bottom out to increase this stretch!

## Strengthening

## 1. For the muscles that pull your foot up towards your shin try...

- sitting on a chair cross-legged. Use one foot to resist the upward movement of the other
- try 10 repetitions resisting through movement then...

**10 holds of 10 seconds  
at the end of range  
(foot pulled as far as possible)**



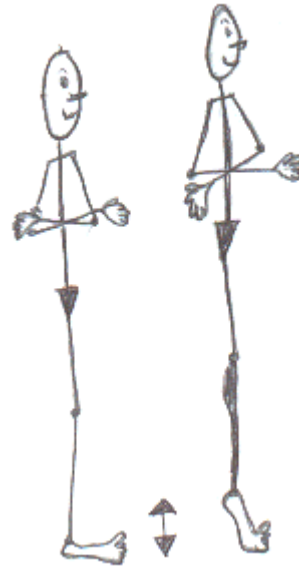
## 2. For the peronei (the muscles along the outer border of your shin) try...

- a loop of elastic or a pair of old panty-hose hooked around both feet
- put one foot firmly on the floor and pull against the elastic with the outer border of your other foot.

**Try 20 repetitions.**

### 3. For your calf muscles (gastrocnemius and soleus) try these heel lifts...

- start on a flat surface, both feet together
- lift up on to toes
- progress by using a step, or try one leg at a time
- you should be able to do at least 30.



### 4. Another exercise to try...

- stand with your heels together (put a piece of paper between them and have your toes pointing to 11 o'clock and 1 o'clock)
- keep the paper pressed tightly between your heels and lift up onto your toes
- lower down slowly until your heels are halfway to the floor
- quickly push back up onto your toes
- try going up and down 5 times.

**Rest after every 5 tries, but try to do this 3 times**

## Balance

Practice balancing on one foot. If it's easy, close your eyes. Watch your posture, keep your hips level, knees slightly bent and bum tucked in !

Throwing or catching a ball while balancing on one leg is a good way of improving your balance. Important safety tip - keep your eyes open for this one !