

# Plantar fasciitis physical therapy

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## Plantar Fasciitis Stretches

Six top stretches to help relieve heel pain

### 1. Soleus Stretch:

With both knees apart and your toes facing forward, lean into the wall until you feel the stretch in your lower calf. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat 3 times.



### 2. Step Stretch:

Stand with your toes on a step and your heels off the edge. Slowly lower your heels down, hold for 15 seconds, and then lift your heels to their starting position. You can either do both feet at the same time, or one foot at a time. Repeat five times.



### 3. Roll Stretch:

Using a Mini Thera-Roll, roll it back and forth from your toes to your heels. This is great for a long day on your feet or to help relieve stiffness or swelling.



### 4. Plantar Fascia Massage:

Using two fingers, apply small circular friction to any tight knots or lumps in the plantar fascia. The pressure should be deep, but not so much that you tighten up with pain.



### 5. Elastic Strap Stretch:

Sit on the floor with your legs straight in front of you. Take a stretch strap and place it around your toes. Gently pull the strap towards you. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds, then release. Repeat 3 times.



### 6. Toe Stretch:

Place just toes up on the wall with the ball of the foot and heel on the ground. Lean into the wall slowly until the stretch is felt. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat 3 times.



## 1. Heel Cord Stretch

### Repetitions

2 sets of 10

### Days per week

6 to 7

**Main muscles worked:** Gastrocnemius-soleus complex

You should feel this stretch in your calf and into your heel

**Equipment needed:** None

### Step-by-step directions

- Stand facing a wall with your unaffected leg forward with a slight bend at the knee. Your affected leg is straight and behind you, with the heel flat and the toes pointed in slightly.
- Keep both heels flat on the floor and press your hips forward toward the wall.
- Hold this stretch for 30 seconds and then relax for 30 seconds. Repeat.

**Tip** Do not arch your back.



## 2. Heel Cord Stretch with Bent Knee

### Repetitions

2 sets of 10

### Days per week

6 to 7

**Main muscles worked:** Soleus

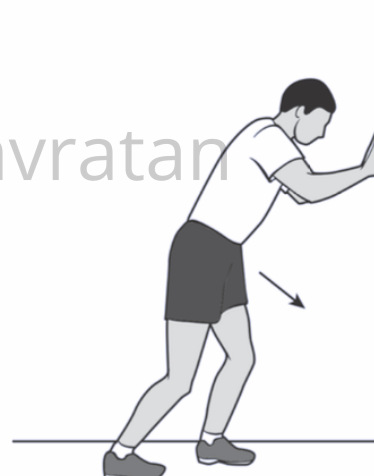
You should feel this stretch in your calf, the sides of your ankle, and into your heel

**Equipment needed:** None

### Step-by-step directions

- Stand facing a wall with your unaffected leg forward with a slight bend at the knee. Your affected leg is behind you, with the knee bent and the toes pointed in slightly.
- Keep both heels flat on the floor and press your hips forward toward the wall.
- Hold the stretch for 30 seconds and then relax for 30 seconds. Repeat.

**Tip** Keep your hips centered over both feet.



## 3. Golf Ball Roll

### Repetitions

1

### Days per week

Daily

**Main muscles worked:** Plantar fascia ligament

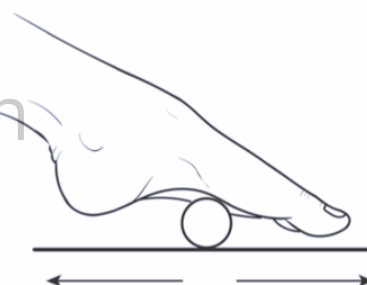
You should feel this exercise along the bottom of your foot

**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.



#### 4. Towel Stretch

##### Repetitions

2 sets of 10

##### Days per week

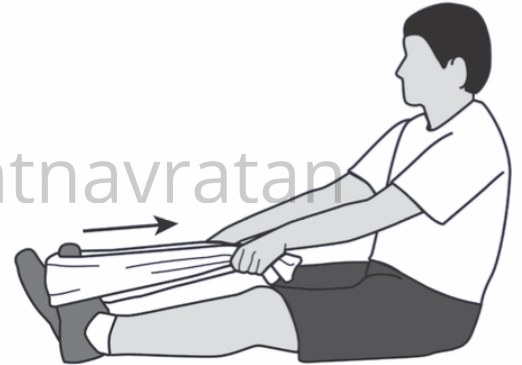
6 to 7

**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.

#### 5. Calf Raises

##### Repetitions

2 sets of 10

##### Days per week

6 to 7

**Main muscles worked:** Gastrocnemius-soleus complex  
You should feel this exercise in your calf

**Equipment needed:** Chair for support

##### Step-by-step directions

- Stand with your weight evenly distributed over both feet. Hold onto the back of a chair or a wall for balance.
- Lift your unaffected foot off of the floor so that all of your weight is placed on your affected foot.
- Raise the heel of your affected foot as high as you can, then lower.
- Repeat 10 times.



**Tip** Do not bend the knee of your working leg.

#### 6. Ankle Range of Motion

##### Repetitions

2 sets

##### Days per week

Daily

**Main muscles worked:** Dorsiflexors, plantar flexors, invertors, evertors  
You should feel this exercise at the top of your foot and throughout your ankle

**Equipment needed:** None

##### Step-by-step directions

- Sit down so that your feet do not touch the floor.
- Use your foot to write each letter of the alphabet in the air. Lead with your big toe.

**Tip** Keep the movements small, using just your foot and ankle.





## 7. 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.

## 8. 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.

## 9. Ankle Dorsiflexion/Plantar Flexion

### Repetitions

3 sets of 10

### Days per week

3

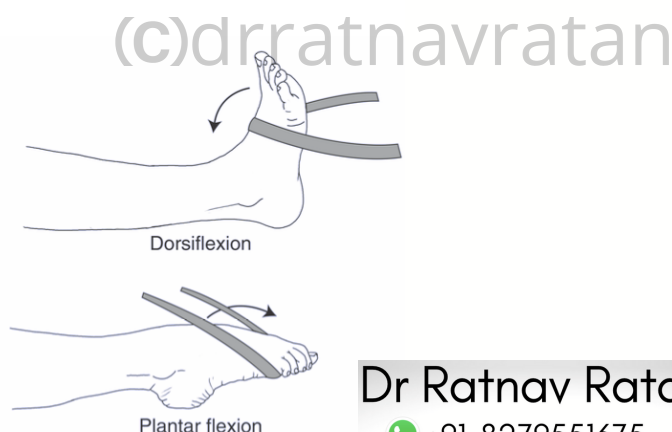
**Main muscles worked:** Anterior tibialis, gastrocnemius-soleus complex

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.

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Source: AAOS