

Top 5 Preventative Exercises for Achilles

1. Eccentric calf straight leg x 25 each foot
2. Eccentric calf bent leg x 25 each foot
3. Knee pointers (both legs) x 7 all directions
4. Single leg knee pointers x 7 each foot all directions
5. Toe pointers x 7 each foot all directions

Eccentric Calf Raises Straight Leg



Value for runners:

Widely considered the best strengthening exercise for runners who suffer from achilles tendonitis.

Slowly lower yourself down from a step with one leg and use the other leg to raise yourself back into tip-toe position. Perform up to 25 of these exercises and add a weight with a backpack once they become easy.

Eccentric Calf Raises Bent Leg



Value for runners:

Same as the straight leg except the focus is on the soleus muscle due to the bending of the leg.

Instructions and variations:

Bend at the knee and slowly lower yourself down from a step with one leg and use the other leg to raise yourself back into tip-toe position. Perform up to 25 of these exercises and add a weight with a backpack once they become easy. It looks the same in the pictures above, but the knee is bent.

Knee Pointers (Both Legs)



(front pointer start)



(front pointer end)



(side (left) pointer end)



(side (right) pointer end)

Value for runners:

The frontal-plane and rotational movement of the knee during the knee pointer exercise forces the Achilles tendon to undergo rotation. The rotational component of the stretch ensures that Achilles flexibility is developed in both the transverse (rotational) plane as well as the sagittal (side-to-side) plane.

Instructions and variations:

Stand with your toes 2-3 inches away from a wall. Keep your weight on your heels. With your heels on the ground, slowly bend your knees until they touch the wall. (Count for 5 seconds on the way down.) Without resting your knees against the wall, hold your knees in the bent position for two seconds and then return to the starting position.

Repeat, but this time move your knees at a thirty degree angle to the right. The movement should come from the ankles and not by rotating your feet or twisting your hips. Repeat again moving your knees at a thirty degree angle to the left. Repeat 7 times in each direction for 21 total repetitions.

Single Leg Pointers



Value for runners:

This is the same exercise as above, but standing on one leg increases the need for balance and therefore difficulty.

Instructions:

If this exercise becomes easy you can stand on a bosu ball or other unstable surface. Repeat 7 times in each direction for 21 total repetitions.

Toe Pointers



Value for runners:

This exercise takes the knee pointers one step further. Standing further away from the wall allows a greater range of motion and having the entire leg in front of you adds weight to the load on the achilles and calf complex.

Notes:

Stand 2 feet from the wall and perform the same movement as the knee pointers, but keep your front leg outstretched. Repeat 7 times in each direction for 21 total repetitions.