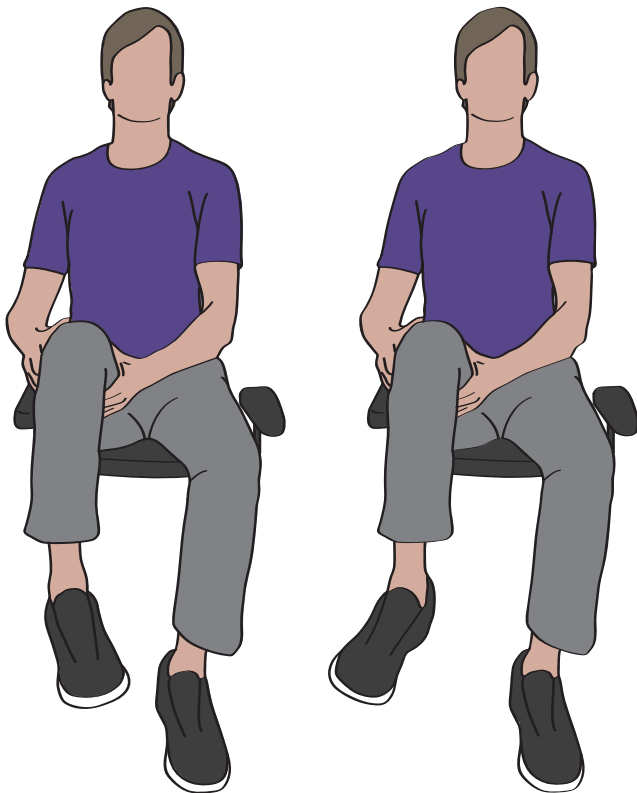


Foot drop exercises

These strengthening exercises are designed to help with foot drop

Mobilisation and activation



Foot circles

- Holding the leg off the floor, make circles with your foot in one direction with particular emphasis on bringing the foot as high as you can as you flex it towards the shin bone and as you take the foot out towards the side
- Do it 10 times in one direction and the 10 in the other direction, repeat twice

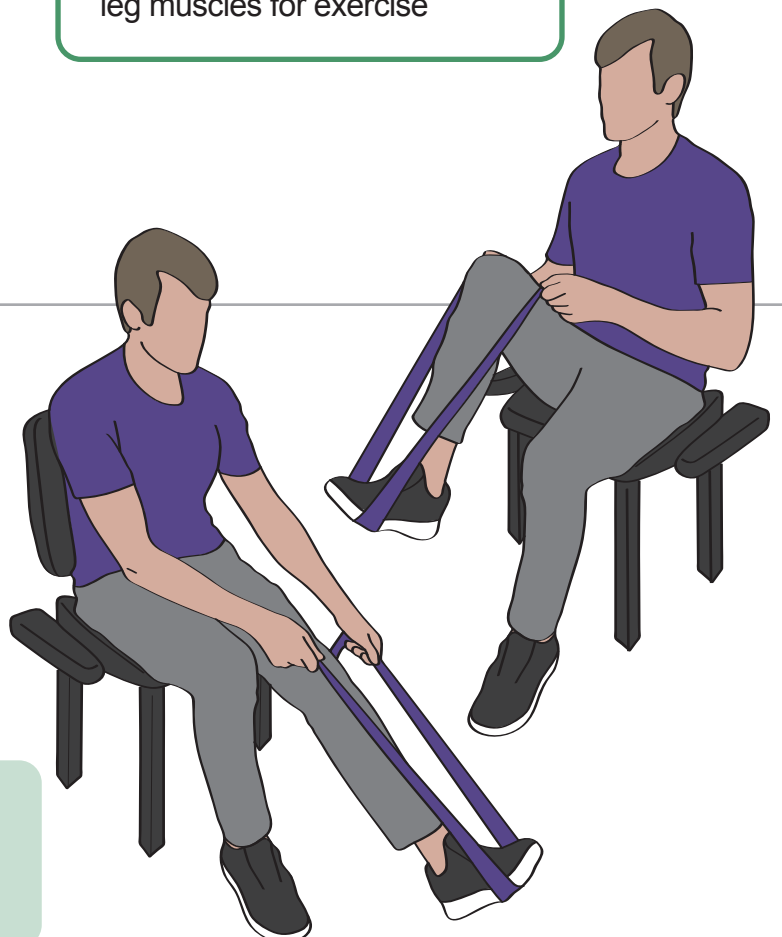
These first two exercises focus on activating and readying the leg muscles for exercise

Leg raises

- Use a towel or band under the foot and start with the leg extended. Bring the knee towards the chest using the towel to assist
- Perform ten repetitions, rest for 30-60 seconds before repeating again

Advanced option Perform the same movement without using the band/towel

This exercise encourages good foot clearance during walking and activates the hip flexor muscles



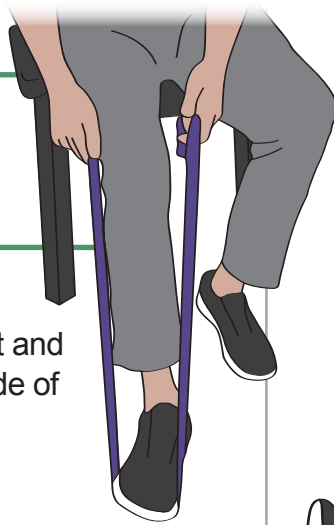
Stretching

This stretch aims to lengthen the muscles on the inside of the leg (invertors) that can become tight

Invertors

- Place a band or towel under the foot and slowly pull on the towel on the outside of the foot so it is taken out to the side and a stretch can be felt on the inside of the lower leg
- Hold the stretch for 20 seconds before releasing and repeating two to three times

Advanced option increase the time held in the stretch to 30 seconds

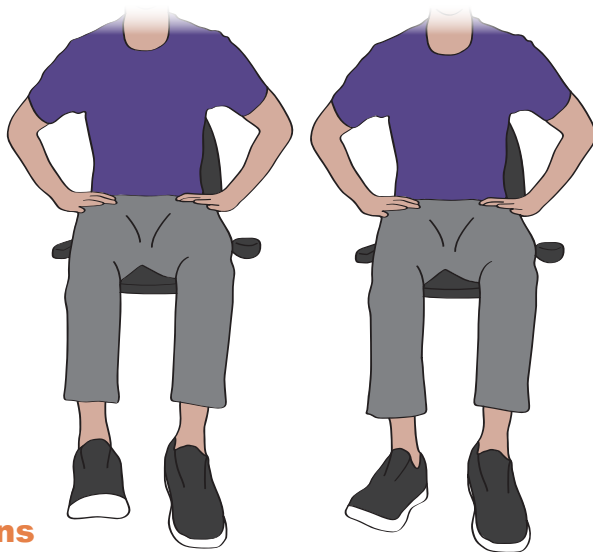


Calf

- With the knee straightened, place a band/ towel under the foot and slowly pull the towel towards you to bring the foot towards the shin. A stretch should be felt in the calf muscle
- Hold the stretch for 20 seconds before releasing and repeating two to three times

Advanced option You can increase the length of the stretch to 30-40 seconds and to get more for your money, assist the movement by contracting the muscles at the front of the leg during the stretch, pulling the toes towards you

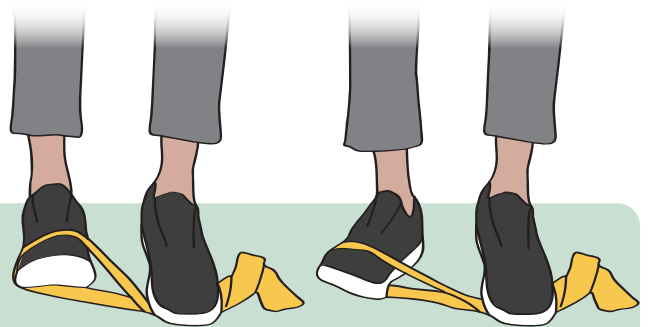
Strengthening



Eversions

- Start with your foot pointing forwards and at a right angle to your shin bone. Slowly move the foot away from the centre of the body, not allowing for any movement at the knee or hip. You will feel the muscles on the outside of the shin working.
- Do five to ten repetitions, one to three sets, with 30-60 second rests between sets.

This exercise aims to strengthen the group of muscles known as the peroneals on the outside of the lower leg



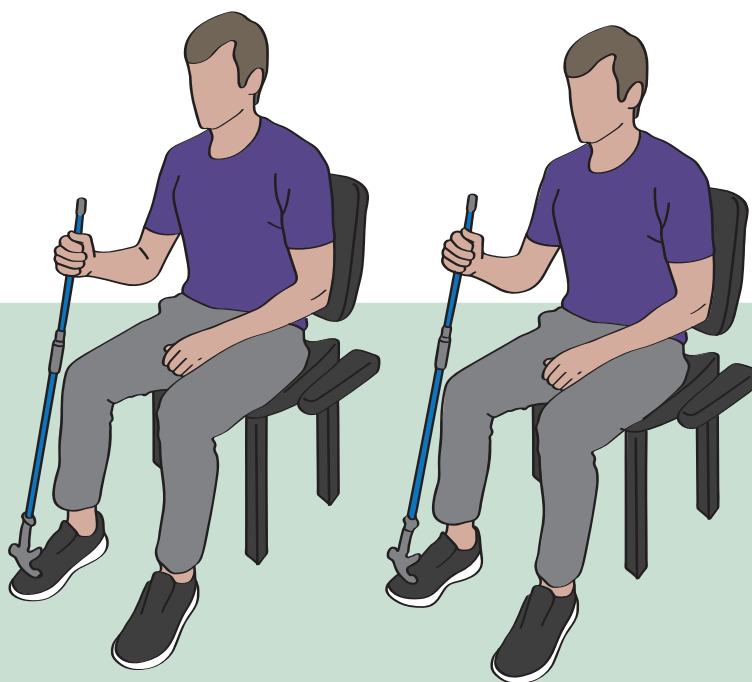
Advanced option You can loop a resistance band around the foot you are moving and place the ends of the band under the supporting foot



Ankle flexions

- Starting with your foot flat on the floor, slowly raise the toes towards your shin bone, being sure to keep your heel on the floor. If you find this difficult, you can use a towel under the foot to help move through the desired motion
- 5-10 repetitions, 1-3 sets. 30-60 seconds rest between sets

Focusing on improving the activation of the ankle dorsiflexor muscles at the front of the shin, this exercise improves the strength of the muscles responsible for holding the foot clear during walking.



Advanced option Before adding resistance with the use of a stick or small weight, the best progression here is to hold the foot in the flexed position at the top of the movement for a count of 3-5 seconds. This will encourage endurance within the muscle which is required during walking.

This exercise focuses on strengthening the hamstring muscles at the rear of the thigh that are important in the swing phase of walking to ensure the lower leg can clear the ground

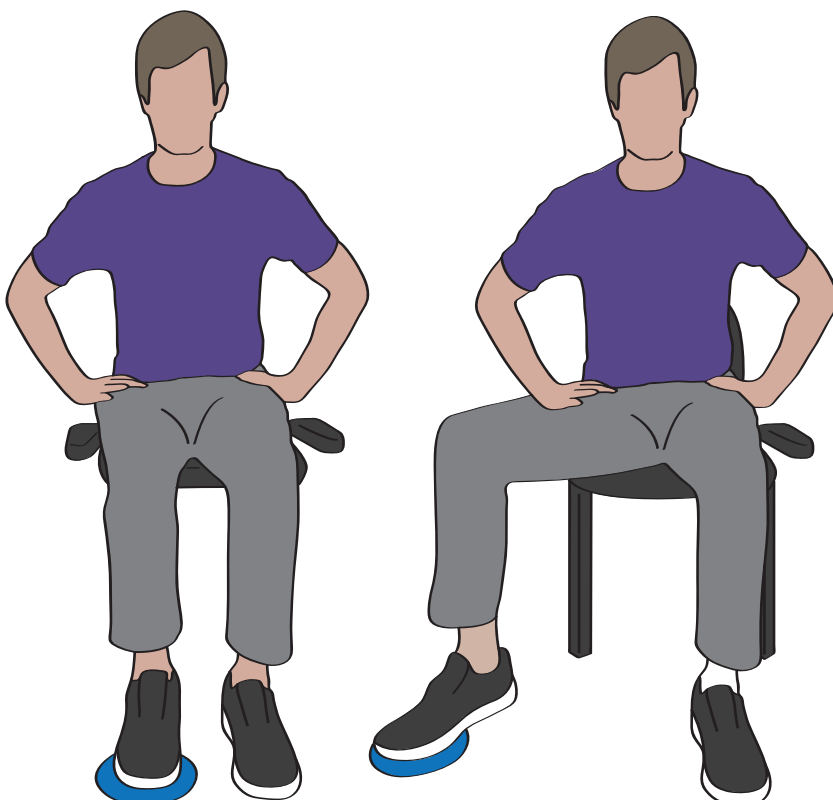
Seated leg curl

- For this exercise you can use a coaster, carrier bag or exercise slider (available cheaply online). Starting with your knee extended, slowly flex the knee as far underneath your sitting position before returning again to the starting position
- 5-10 repetitions, 1-3 sets. 30-60 seconds rest between sets



Advanced option The same movement can be performed standing and holding on to a solid surface and bending the knee to bring the heel towards the bottom.

This exercise helps strengthen the gluteal muscles in the buttocks, which are important for creating stability and control during walking.



Seated leg abduction

- Place a coaster or carrier bag under your foot and start with feet flat on the floor. Slowly move the leg out to the side, keeping the ankle and knee at ninety degrees. Return slowly to the starting position.
- 5-10 repetitions, 1-3 sets. 30-60 seconds rest between sets.

Advanced option Add resistance using your hand.