

## MERCY URGENT CARE CENTRE

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### PIL -Calf Injury Exercises & Advice




A calf strain or injury can occur when the calf muscles are suddenly “overstretched”. This leads to tearing in some of the muscle fibres in your calf.

After the injury you may develop: Bruising, Swelling, Pain, Difficulty walking & you may have difficulty putting your heel to the floor. The following advice and exercises will help improve the symptoms:

- Rest your leg and elevate it when you are sitting.
- Ice is very effective in the first 72 hours after an acute injury. You should ice the injured area every 2-3 hours for 10-15 minutes (wet a towel with cold water and wrap crushed ice or a bag of frozen vegetables). You can still use ice for pain relief after this time period if it gives you relief.
- If your calf is swollen wear a compression bandage but remove it at night.
- If you are walking with crutches, gradually increase the weight you are putting on your injured foot.
- You should take pain killers such as paracetamol or topical gels to help the pain.

The following exercises should be performed 3 times each day:

#### Days 1-7 after your injury

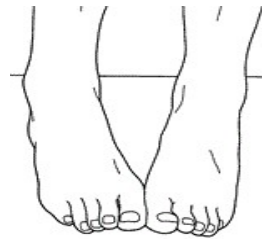
<p>1. Sitting with the foot supported bend the ankle down, return to the middle. Repeat 10 times.</p> 	<p>2. Sitting with the foot on the ground, raise the inner and outer border of your foot. 10 times.</p> 
<p>3. Sitting with your foot resting on top of a plastic bag on the floor gently slide your foot backwards without lifting your heel until you feel a gentle stretch in the calf, <b>do not push into pain</b>. Repeat 10 times.</p>	

**Day 7 onwards-** Continue to elevate and ice your calf if it continues to be swollen. Addition to the previous exercises, start the following exercises:

4. With your uninjured foot on top of your injured foot, try to lift the foot that is under while preventing movement by the foot on top. Hold 5 seconds and repeat 10 times.



5. Place the inner borders of your big toes against each other and press together. Hold for 5 seconds and repeat 10 times.



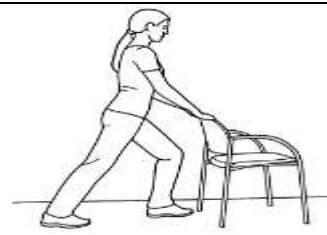
6. With your injured leg on top of your uninjured leg, try to point the toe and ankle downwards with your injured foot while preventing the movement with your foot underneath. Hold for 5 seconds and repeat 10 times.



7. **Day 14 onwards** If you are having minimal or no pain you can start some gentle weight bearing exercises. Leaning on a work top or bench, push up onto your toes and slowly lower. If it is painful take more weight through your hands. Repeat 10 times.



8. Step your injured leg behind your uninjured leg, bend your front knee forwards until you feel a small stretch in your calf on your injured leg. **Do not push into pain.** Hold for 20 seconds and repeat 3 times.



It can take **6-8 weeks** for calf injuries to heal depending on how severe the injury was. If you were given a heel raise, wear it for 1 week and then start to wean off it.

If you require further information regarding your injury, please contact your GP, physiotherapist or the Mercy Injury Unit.

**The Mercy Injury Unit – Gurrabraher is open:  
8 am to 6 pm Monday – Sunday.  
Telephone: (021) 4926900 or (021) 4926901**