

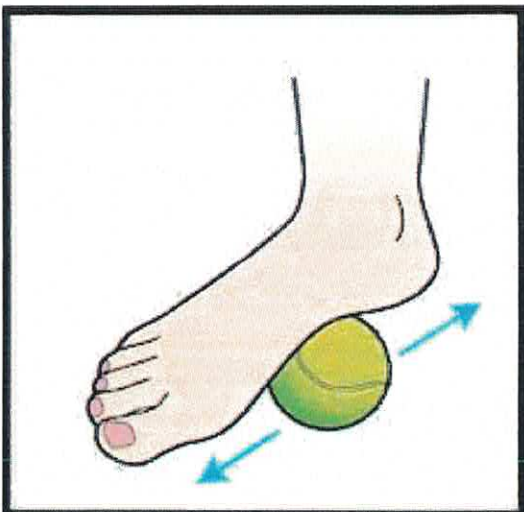
Stretching the plantar fascia

One way the plantar fascia can be stretched is by pulling up on the foot and toes with the hands. Hold the stretch for about 30 seconds. Repeat this stretch 5 times and aim to stretch 3 times a day. It takes discipline to stretch regularly until the pain goes but it is important.



Plantar fascia stretch by rolling

The plantar fascia can be stretched by rolling the foot over a round object such as a ball, weights bar, rolling pin or can of soup (or similar). Roll the foot repeatedly over the object, applying increasing downwards pressure. Using an object which can be cooled in the freezer, such as a bottle or metal can, also applies cold therapy at the same time! This should be continued for 10 minutes per day until you can walk pain free in the mornings.



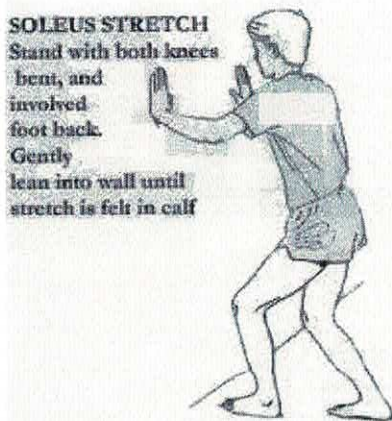
Gastrocnemius stretch

Place the leg to be stretched behind and lean forward, ensuring the heel is kept in contact with the floor at all times. Hold the stretch for 20 to 30 seconds and repeat 3 times. This can be repeated several times a day and should not be painful. A stretch should be felt at the back of the lower leg. If not then move the back leg further back. A more advanced version of a calf stretch is to use a step and drop the heel down off it.



Soleus stretch

To stretch the soleus muscle the back leg should be bent. Place the leg to be stretched behind and lean against a wall keeping the heel down. A stretch should be felt lower down nearer the ankle at the back of the leg. If this stretch is not felt then a more advanced version is to place the forefoot of the front leg against the wall with the heel on the floor and push the front knee towards the wall.



Stretching on a step

This stretch can be performed to further the stretch on the calf muscles and achilles. Stand on a step with the toes on the step and the heels off the back. Carefully lower the heels down below the level of the step until you feel a stretch - make sure you have something to hold on to!

Hold for 15-20 seconds. This should be performed with the knee straight and then repeated with the knee bent to make sure you are stretching both muscles. You should feel a gentle stretch. Be careful not to over-do this one.

