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Tight Achilles Tendon Stretches

Last Updated: Oct 21, 2013 | By Sarka-Jonae Miller



Photo Caption The Achilles tendon on the back of your lower leg shortens to raise your heels. Photo Credit Hemera Technologies/Photos.com/Getty Images

Even if you don't have an exceptionally active lifestyle, your calf muscles still get quite the workout during a normal day. They become strong, and unless stretched regularly, tight, and prone to injuries. The Achilles tendon in particular can become ruptured if you undertake activities, like yoga and some sports, which require length in your calves. Perform these stretches to ensure the muscles in your calves protect your Achilles tendons.

Active Achilles Stretch

Active stretching is a method that involves holding stretches for short durations. This type of stretching is ideal when you are rehabilitating an injury. It also improves flexibility when the muscles are tight. To perform an active Achilles stretch, sit on any surface with your legs straight in front of you. Pull your toes toward you until you feel a stretch in the Achilles tendon along the back of the bottom of your calf. Hold this stretch for five seconds and then relax your toes forward.

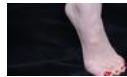
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Soleus Muscle Stretch

The soleus is one of the two calf muscles that insert into the Achilles tendon. Stretching the soleus lengthens the Achilles. Face a wall and stand with your left foot near the wall and your right foot back. Brace your torso by placing your palms against the wall at shoulder level. Bend your left knee slightly and then bend your right knee until you feel a stretch in your right calf. Hold this stretch for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat on the opposite leg.

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Gastrocnemius Muscle Stretch

The gastrocnemius is the other calf muscle that connects to the Achilles tendon; and stretching it also stretches the Achilles. Face a wall with your left foot forward and right foot stepped back about a foot. Brace your body with your palms against the wall. Bend your left knee and straighten your right. Lean forward into the wall and bend your left knee until you feel a stretch in the right Achilles. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds and then switch sides.

Achilles/Calf Door Stretch

The Achilles/calf door stretch targets the Achilles tendon to a greater degree than the other stretches because it begins with your toes already pulled back toward your shins. You then move forward to increase the stretch. To do this stretch, place the ball of your left foot against the bottom of a door with your heel on the ground. Step your right foot back. Straighten both your legs and place your hands against the door. Then, shift your hips and torso forward until you feel a stretch in the left Achilles. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds and then switch sides.

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