

Ankle Recovery Exercises

WHEN THEY ALREADY HURT

Coach Oliete · Once a day · Rest about 30 seconds between sets

DO NOT MAKE IT HURT. If an exercise causes pain, stop. Make it easier or skip it today. A little stretch or muscle work is fine. Sharp pain, or pain that gets worse, is not. After an ankle sprain or ankle pain, the goal is to get the ankle moving again, then rebuild strength and balance. Start at the top of each section. Move to the next exercise only when the one before it feels easy and pain-free.

NO EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Ankle Alphabet 3 sets of A to Z	Sit with your leg out in front of you. Use your big toe to slowly "draw" the letters in the air, moving only your ankle. Keep the letters small at first.
Seated Calf Raises 3 sets of 15	Sit in a chair with both feet flat. Slowly lift your heels as high as you can, then lower them. This works the calf without your full body weight on the ankle.
Arch Lifts (Short Foot) 3 sets of 10, hold 5 sec	Sit with your foot flat. Without curling your toes, pull the ball of your foot toward your heel so your arch lifts. Hold, then relax.
Weight Shifts 3 sets of 10 each way	Stand holding a counter. Slowly shift your weight side to side onto the injured foot, then front to back. Only shift as far as feels comfortable.
Standing Calf Raises 3 sets of 10 to 15	Hold a wall or counter and rise up onto your toes on both feet, then lower slowly. Later, put more weight on the injured side, and then do them on that foot only.
Balance Near a Wall 3 sets of 10 to 30 sec	Stand next to a wall on the injured foot. Touch the wall if you need to. Start at 10 seconds and work up to 30 seconds without touching.

WITH EQUIPMENT

Equipment needed: a towel, about 10 small balls (marbles or bouncy balls) and a cup, and a light resistance band.

Towel Calf Stretch 3 sets of 20 to 30 sec	Sit with your leg straight and loop a towel around the ball of your foot. Gently pull the towel toward you until you feel a light stretch in your calf. Do not bounce.
Towel Scrunches 3 sets of 30 sec	Sit with a towel flat on the floor under your bare foot. Use your toes to scrunch the towel toward you, then push it back out.
Small Ball Pickups 3 sets of 10 balls	Sit with about 10 small balls on the floor next to a cup. Pick up one ball at a time with your toes and drop it in the cup.
Band Pushes 3 sets of 10 each way	Sit with your legs straight and a band looped around your foot. Gently push your foot down, out, and in against the band. Keep it slow, and use a light band at first.

Before you run again: You should be able to walk normally, hop on the injured foot 10 times, and balance on it for 30 seconds, all with no pain. Start with easy, short runs on flat ground. See a doctor if you cannot walk 4 steps, the ankle is very swollen or bruised, the bone itself is sore to touch, or the pain is not getting better after a few days. Let Coach Oliete know how it feels.

Disclaimer: Coach Oliete is not a doctor, and this sheet is not medical advice. Only you (the runner) or a doctor can judge whether these exercises are safe for you to do. If you are unsure, check with a doctor first.