

Stretching the Calf Muscle

The calf muscle, (gastrocnemius) is the bulky muscle at the back of the lower leg. It attaches above to the lower end of the thigh bone, and below it attaches to the heel bone (**Figure 1**).

The calf muscle helps you to rise onto your toes. It also gives you push-off in walking and running, and spring in hopping and jumping activities.

The calf muscle should be flexible to allow the knee to remain fully straight while the foot is lifted up towards the face (**Figure 2**).

Your calf muscle is tight. See instructions below for the recommended daily calf stretch.

Standing calf stretch

Keeping your back knee straight with the heel firmly on the floor and the toes pointing forward, lean towards the wall until a gentle stretch is felt in the calf.

Hold for 30 seconds, then repeat twice (**Figure 3**).

Change your starting position to stretch the other leg.

Note: All exercise should be pain free or with minimum discomfort only. If there is difficulty or concern please discontinue and contact the physiotherapist.

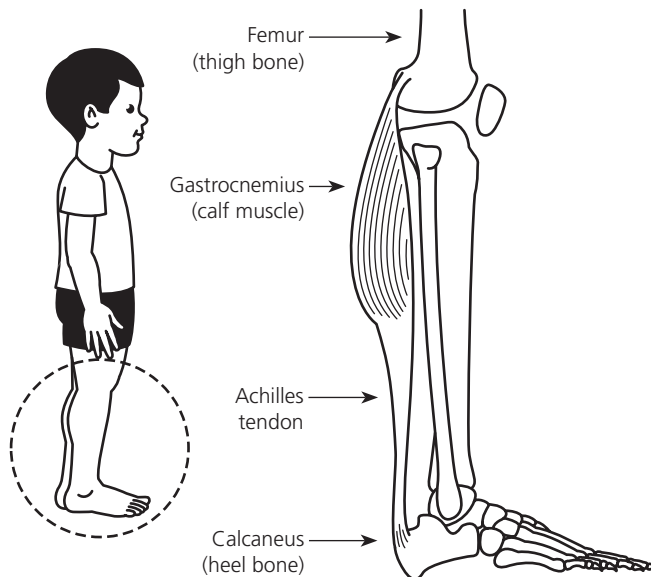


Figure 1. Anatomy of the lower leg.

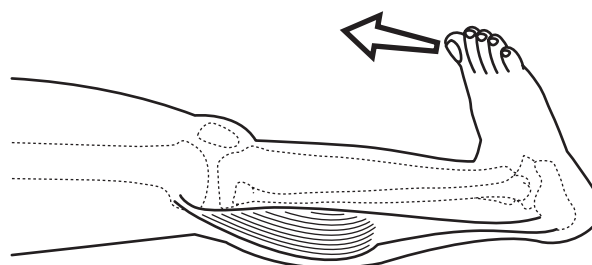


Figure 2. Knee remains straight as the foot is lifted.



Rear knee straight with heel down

Keep feet facing forward

Figure 3. Standing calf stretch.