



Patient & Family Guide

2024

# Exercises After Foot or Toe Injury



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# Exercises After Foot or Toe Injury

You may now move your foot and/or toe. You may feel discomfort when you first start the exercises. This is common.

You may have some bruising or swelling in your ankle and/or foot. This will get better over time.

## What will happen after my cast/bandage is taken off?

### Swelling

- Your foot may be bruised or swollen.
- Swelling may last for months.
- The amount of swelling you have may change throughout the day.

### To lower swelling:

- Raise your leg when you are resting, so that your foot is above the level of your heart.
- Bend your ankle and point your foot often.
- If you have been given a compression stocking:
  - › Wear it during the day.
  - › Take it off to do your exercises and to sleep.

- Raise your foot at night by putting pillows under your leg or by putting a pillow under your mattress at the end of the bed.
- Use ice (see page 3).
- Start massaging your scar when told by your physiotherapist. Your incision (cut) scar must be well-healed.

## **Stiffness**

- Your foot and/or toe may be stiff (hard to move). This is common.
- To help get the movement back in your joints, start moving your foot and/or toe as told by your physiotherapist.
- You may feel discomfort when you first start the exercises. This will go away over time, as your foot and/or toes become more flexible.

## **Walking**

- Your doctor or physiotherapist will tell you:
  - › how much weight you may put on your foot.
  - › the type of walking aid to use (like a cane or crutches), if needed.
- Try to walk a bit more each day.

## Heat and ice

- Before exercising, use heat (like a hot pack, a hot water bottle, or a soak in warm water) for about 15 minutes to help loosen up your foot and/or toe.
  - › Your incision **must** be well-healed and not infected before using heat or soaking in water.
- Use ice (like a gel pack or a bag of frozen vegetables) for about 15 minutes after exercising to help control pain in your foot and/or toe.

## Spacer

If you have a toe spacer, take it off to do your exercises.

## Exercises

- It is important to hold the stretches for the full amount of time. This helps your muscles stretch.
- **Only do the exercises you have been asked to do.** See which exercises (starting on next page) have been checked off by your physiotherapist.
- **Plan to do your exercises 3 times each day.**

## Exercises

### Exercise 1

- Move your toes up. Hold for 5 seconds. Relax.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



### Exercise 2

- Bend your toes down. Hold for 5 seconds. Relax.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



### □ Exercise 3

- Move your big toe out to the side, away from the rest of your toes. Hold for 5 seconds. Relax and move your big toe back to the starting position.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



## Stretching exercises

### □ Exercise 4

- Sit in a chair.
- Bend the knee of your affected leg so that you can reach your toes.
- Keep the bottom of your toes still with 1 hand. Use your other hand to hold the end of your toe.
- Slowly bend your toe downwards until you feel a stretch. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds. Relax.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



### □ Exercise 5

- Sit in a chair.
- Bend the knee of your affected leg so that you can reach your toes. Hold the end of your toe.
- Slowly bend your toe upwards until you feel a stretch. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds. Relax.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



## □ Exercise 6

- Sit in a chair.
- Bend the knee of your affected leg so that you can reach your toes. Hold the end of your toe.
- Slowly bend the **tip** of your toe downwards until you feel a stretch. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds. Relax.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



**What are your questions?  
Please ask. We are here to help you.**



## Strengthening exercises

### □ Exercise 7

- Put a towel on the floor in front of a chair. Sit in the chair.
- Place your heel on the floor and the ball of your affected foot on the towel.
- Grasp the towel with your toes, bunching the towel. Hold for 5 seconds. Relax.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



### □ Exercise 8

- Sit in a chair.
- Raise your heel up while keeping your toes flat on the floor, and pushing your toes down. Hold for 5 seconds.
- Slowly lower your heel back down and relax.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



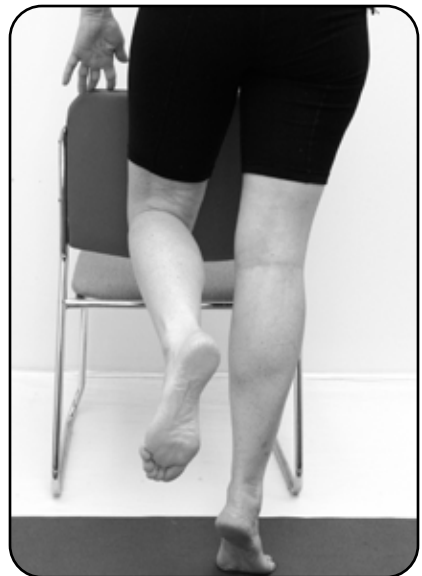
## □ Exercise 9

- Stand facing something stable (like a kitchen counter or chair) and hold on with both hands.
- Use both of your feet to rise up onto your toes. Hold for 5 seconds, then slowly lower.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



## Progression:

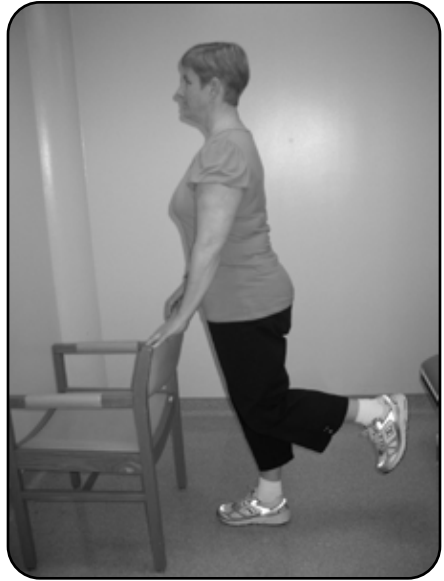
- When you are feeling stronger, stand only on your affected foot and rise up on your toes.
- Hold for 5 seconds, then slowly lower.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



## Balance exercises

### □ Exercise 10

- Stand facing something stable (like a kitchen counter or chair) and hold on with both hands.
- Stand on your affected foot. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Relax.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



## Progressions

- As your leg gets stronger, lower the amount of support you use to help you balance on 1 leg. Try:
  - › Fingertip support with 2 hands
  - › Using only 1 hand for support
  - › Not using any hands for support
- When your balance is better and you can balance on 1 leg with no support, try balancing with your eyes closed.

# Notes:

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This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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