

# Foot Arthritis: Exercises

## Your Care Instructions

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Here are some examples of exercises for foot arthritis. Start each exercise slowly. Ease off the exercise if you start to have pain.

Your doctor or physical therapist will tell you when you can start these exercises and which ones will work best for you.

## How to do the exercises

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### Calf stretch (knees straight)

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1. Place a book on the floor a few inches from a wall or countertop, and put the balls of your feet on it. Your heels should be on the floor. The book needs to be thick enough so that you can feel a gentle stretch in your calf. If you are not steady on your feet, hold on to a chair, counter, or wall while you do this stretch.
2. Keep your knees straight, and lean forward until you feel a stretch in your calf.
3. To get more stretch, add another book or use a thicker book, such as a phone book, a dictionary, or an encyclopedia.
4. Hold the stretch for at least 15 to 30 seconds.
5. Repeat 2 to 4 times.

## Calf stretch (knees bent)

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1. Place a book on the floor a few inches from a wall or countertop, and put the balls of your feet on it. Your heels should be on the floor. The book needs to be thick enough so that you can feel a gentle stretch in your calf. If you are not steady on your feet, hold on to a chair, counter, or wall while you do this stretch.
2. Bend your knees, and lean forward until you feel a stretch in your calf.
3. To get more stretch, add another book or use a thicker book, such as a phone book, a dictionary, or an encyclopedia.
4. Hold the stretch for at least 15 to 30 seconds.
5. Repeat 2 to 4 times.

## Great toe extension stretch

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1. Sit in a chair, and put your affected foot across your other knee.
2. Grasp your heel with one hand and then slowly pull your big toe back with your other hand. Pull your toe back toward your ankle until you feel a stretch along the bottom of your foot.
3. Hold the stretch for at least 15 to 30 seconds.
4. Repeat 2 to 4 times.
5. Switch feet and repeat steps 1 through 4, even if only one foot is sore.

## Great toe flexion stretch

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1. Sit in a chair, and put your affected foot across your other knee.
2. Grasp your heel with one hand and then slowly push your big toe down with your other hand. Push your toe down and away from your ankle until you feel a stretch along the top of your foot.
3. Hold the stretch for at least 15 to 30 seconds.
4. Repeat 2 to 4 times.
5. Switch feet and repeat steps 1 through 4, even if only one foot is sore.

## Ankle alphabet

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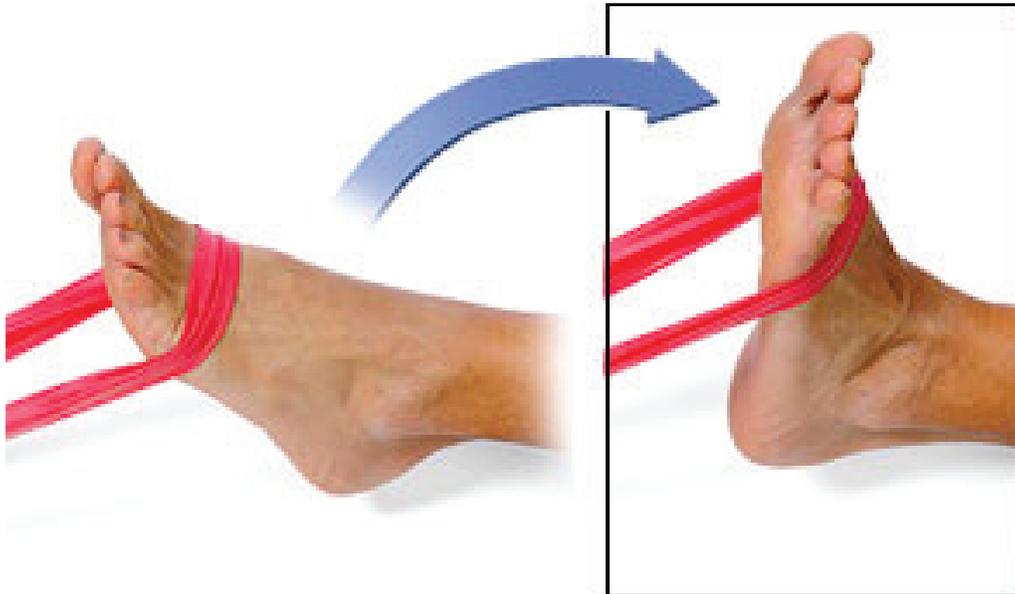
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1. Sit in a chair with your feet flat on the floor. (You can also do this exercise lying on your back with your affected leg propped up on a pillow).
2. Lift the heel of your sore foot off the floor, and slowly trace the letters of the alphabet.
3. Switch feet and repeat steps 1 through 2, even if only one foot is sore.

## Resisted ankle dorsiflexion

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1. Tie the ends of an exercise band together to form a loop. Attach one end of the loop to a secure object or shut a door on it to hold it in place. (Or you can have someone hold one end of the loop to provide resistance.)
2. While sitting on the floor or in a chair, loop the other end of the band over the top of your affected foot.
3. Keeping your knee and leg straight, slowly flex your foot to pull back on the exercise band, and then slowly relax.
4. Repeat 8 to 12 times.
5. Switch feet and repeat steps 1 through 4, even if only one foot is sore.

## Towel curl

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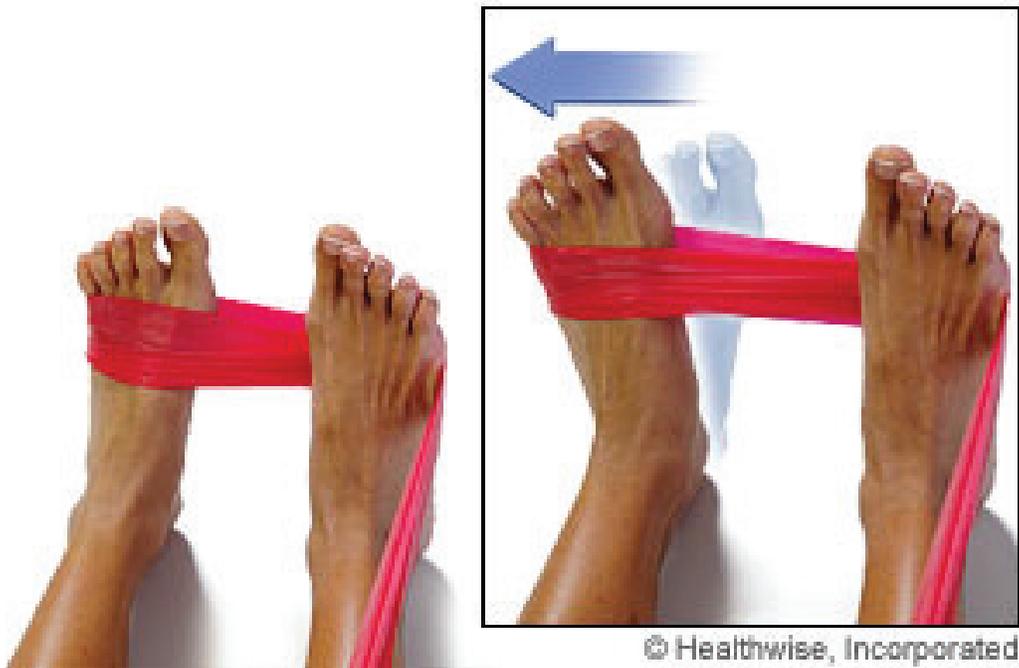
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1. While sitting, place your affected foot on a towel on the floor, and scrunch the towel toward you with your toes.
2. Then use your toes to push the towel away from you.
3. Repeat 8 to 12 times.
4. Switch feet and repeat steps 1 through 3, even if only one foot is sore.

## Resisted ankle eversion

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1. Sit on the floor with your legs straight.
2. Hold both ends of an exercise band and loop the band around the outside of your affected foot. Then press your other foot against the band.
3. Keeping your leg straight, slowly push your affected foot outward against the band and away from your other foot without letting your leg rotate. Then slowly relax.
4. Repeat 8 to 12 times.
5. Switch feet and repeat steps 1 through 4, even if only one foot is sore.

## Resisted ankle inversion



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1. Sit on the floor with your good leg crossed over your other leg.
2. Hold both ends of an exercise band and loop the band around the inside of your affected foot. Then press your other foot against the band.
3. Keeping your legs crossed, slowly push your affected foot against the band so that foot moves away from your other foot. Then slowly relax.
4. Repeat 8 to 12 times.
5. Switch feet and repeat steps 1 through 4, even if only one foot is sore.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

### Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://www.healthwise.net/ed>

Enter **K113** in the search box to learn more about "**Foot Arthritis: Exercises**".

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